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EST. 2004

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Chronic Fatigue

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who's all in Chronic Fatigue and what are you all about?

Quinn: We have Sam on vocals, Sean on guitar, Dylan on bass, and I play drums. For myself, all the time and work we put in pays off when we get to play live. I love the live music experience more than anything, especially for punk music— I love to see people dancing and moshing and having a great time. That's what it's all about.

Sean: Ultimately, we're about having fun. That should be part of the main experience for our audience.

AU: You just released your new EP *Surrender to Serenity*. Are there any songs you're particularly stoked on?

Quinn: I'm really stoked on the EP, I think it captures the energy of our live shows really well, which was the main goal. "Serenity" is my favourite, I love how dynamic that song is, and it really plays well at shows. It's bouncy and fun. Sam's vocals have a nice rhythm to them and it's dance-able but also hits hard. The original demo I wrote was much more simplistic, but we collaborated a lot on it to get it where it is now. Sean's guitar work added so much. I love the ending section, it was initially just a live addition and a chance for Sam to jump in the mosh pit at shows, but we just couldn't cut it when it came time to record it. I'm also really fired up on "Arc Flash", I love the contrast between the lighter verses and the heavier chorus and hook.

Dylan: Definitely "Bus Beers"! That song always gets a great reception whenever we play it live and people were always asking us to record it.

Sean: "Arc Flash", which is one of the directions I'd like to take our sound.

Sam: Honestly, all of them. Playing these songs so

often it's easy to get kind of desensitized to how fucking awesome they are, but hearing them recorded and being able to bump it in the car and whatnot has been really refreshing and pushes us to keep going. I'm also really stoked on "Serenity". I think it's my best songwriting and really has something to say. "Surrender to Serenity" (the chorus) really feels like the whole point of this band. Letting go and surrendering to be able to let loose and get out what you need to get out.

AU: Your sound has evolved since you started, with you incorporating hip hop and post punk in your latest release. What can you tell us about that?

Sean: I feel like that's always been a part of the mission from very early on, but it's been fun seeing it all come together. I see it as a natural blend of each band member and our individual interests, like leaning into Sam's love of hip hop.

Dylan: Quinn has always liked playing post-punk type drum beats and recently we've been trying to write songs that allow Sam to flex his rapping skills. So, on this record both of those elements came together and made it sound more unique than our last EP.

Sam: It feels like we've all grown more comfortable with each other as people and through that have been able to explore our ideas further. When Quinn started the band, he seemed pretty set on a straightforward punk band. As we've all grown together it seems totally natural

that our sound has evolved with it.

Quinn: 100%. I think when we started, I envisioned every song just sounding kinda like our first track "Danger Zone"— just hard-hitting, in-your-face punk stuff. I'm a pretty terrible guitarist and an okay bass player, so when I was demoing out the tracks, I was limited to writing pretty cool, pretty catchy punk songs. Once we got Sean into the mix adding more skill and nuance to the guitar work it really opened things up. We also found really quickly that Sam's affinity for hip-hop and that vocal style really

worked with our sound and gave us a more specific sonic identity. A year ago, I would've thought I'd be content with playing simple punk songs and nothing else, but now I can't imagine not incorporating post-punk, hip-hop, hardcore... all the other elements that make the sound so much more interesting.

AU: You've been on fire this year, releasing EPs every couple of months. What's your songwriting process like and what keeps you inspired?

Sean: Every song starts with a small idea which we expand on collaboratively. Smaller

ideas come easier and so they just keep coming and they don't stop coming.

Sam: Songwriting usually starts with a demo worked out by Quinn. Sean and Dylan learn the parts and add their own spin to it, and we bring it to practice and put it together. I'll get a recording of it and work out a concept and then a first set of lyrics. Maybe just a verse and chorus. Over the course of a few practices, we'll put it together and get some kind of finished product. Once we're comfortable with it we'll try it out at a show and get a sense of the audience's response. In terms of what keeps us inspired, it's the live shows. Feeling the audience's response to our music is really the whole purpose of all of this. It informs and inspires so much of what we do.

Quinn: The longer we play together the more collaborative it gets. Most of the riffs you hear that I can take credit for I wrote just messing around on my bass while watching a movie at home or something. I've found leaning into more hip-hop inspired vocals has really helped me move away from traditional punk songwriting and try to write parts that leave space for and make sense for that style of vocalization. The challenge of trying to work out ideas that sound like us but also consistently incorporate something new and exciting and weird keeps me inspired.

Dylan: We love going to see local bands play and I think hearing other bands try new things helps us avoid writer's block. We also practice a lot and try to always have new songs to work on.

AU: You enlisted local skaters including Dashell Willborn and Sean Pearson for the music video for your single "Serenity", what made you decide to make a skate video for the song?

Quinn: A friend of ours, Liam Tait, turned me onto old skate videos when we lived together last year. He's been our videographer for every music video we've done so far and done a ton of photography work for us— he's basically our fifth band member at this point. He's been skating for years and showed me lots of classic skate stuff. None of us in the band really skateboard, but through him I grew to really appreciate skating and skate culture— it's tied to punk rock in so many cool ways. I had the thought a while ago to

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

work with him and make a skate video, thinking I could record a little instrumental track as the soundtrack, then one day I was like "What am I talking about, I'm in a band, let's just make a video and use our song, duh."

Liam recommended Dashell, who's an unreal skater, just outta high school and insanely dope, and his buddy Frankie DaDawg, our boy. Those dudes rule, it was super fun shooting with them. I actually met Sean Pearson through my old church youth group when I was in high school, funnily enough. He was a big supporter of my first band Kid Lucifer as well as Chronic Fatigue. The whole shoot was a wicked good time, I'd do it again in a heartbeat.

AU: Any upcoming show or tour plans?

Quinn: We have a couple at the end of the month, including the finals for the Live Acts Best in Vancouver competition. We're playing steadily around Vancouver early next year, and super excited to be heading back to Vancouver Island March 21st-22nd, plus planning to get outta town around BC and Alberta this summer!

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

Sam: A well-crafted balance of mischief and generosity.

Dylan: Only Santa can tell you that.

Quinn: I'm always nice, I've never been naughty ever in my life, not once.

AU: Anything else you'd like to promote?

Dylan: Our new EP *Surrender to Serenity* is out on most places you can find music and over the next couple months we're gonna focus even more on writing new music so watch out for that.

Quinn: We just shot a super cool video for our song "Pyro", it's also very skate inspired. Keep an eye out for that. I also write, direct and produce



audio drama podcasts in my spare time, my first one *Greyshading* is out wherever you listen and I just put out a new one called *Frequency 001-004* that I'm excited about. More coming soon too.

AU: Final words for our readers?

Dylan: Beer tastes better on public transportation (not that I would know anything about that).

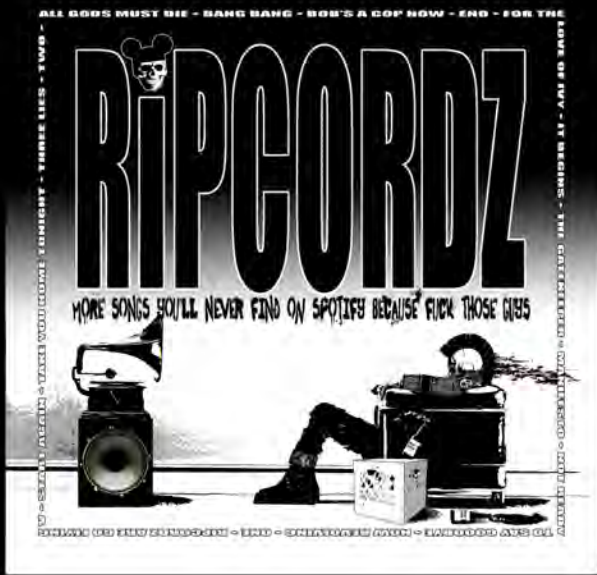
Quinn: Whether you're here with us in Vancouver or elsewhere, go check out your local music scene. I hate when people say there's no good rock or punk music or anything else out there— there are so many incredibly talented people out there struggling to cut through the noise. If you put in a bit of effort to find them, you'll be rewarded generously. I truly wish the scene wasn't just a scene, but something everyone— no matter your background or age or anything else—would check out and enjoy. There really is something for everyone. If you are in Vancouver, check out @ThisWeekInVan on Instagram, they post basically every cool event going on every week, it's an incredible resource for finding great live entertainment in a city that can make it challenging.

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QUEBEC SIN CITY

arrangements that we already had worked on.

AU: How was it working with the legend, Christian Donaldson (Cryptopsy) for mixing and mastering the EP?

MC: With the help of a crazy good sound engineer like Christian Donaldson, we have created a standard in terms of production quality, and it has driven us to work more and more on refining this sound. We have been working with Christian Donaldson already since 2017, as he produced our EP *The Traveler's Path*. It is always a pleasure working with such a professional and passionate guy as Chris. We can't imagine ourselves dealing

enjoyable musical experience, great storytelling, and grow our following by releasing quality music.

AU: Any plans for touring in 2025?

MC: We are planning to do some local tours in 2025 to promote the EP.

AU: Anything else you would like to add?

MC: Make sure to follow us and listen to the EP! Thanks guys.

trollwar.bandcamp.com

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Trollwar

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: Welcome to Absolute Underground Magazine, who are you and what do you do?

Mathieu Chauvette: My name is Mathieu Chauvette, and I'm one of the two guitarists for Trollwar. I also do backing vocals, and play the role of producer along with Steeve JF (guitar) for our material.

AU: It's been six years since you released your album, *Oath of the Storm*, what can you tell us about your new EP, *Tales From the Frozen Wastes*?

MC: I think our album could really be described as a renewal. A renewal of our music and a new maturity for our music. I do think that you can hear it through our songs in this release. "The Unseen One" and "In the Fields of Frost" are both great songs that we wrote a couple of years ago, while "Bane of the Underworld" and "The Offering" are pretty much the new Trollwar that you should expect going forward. These two songs show a

clear upgrade of how we write our music.

AU: You're quoted as saying this EP is "a renewal of our music and a new maturity for our music," can you elaborate more on how this compares to previous releases?

MC: The band's sound has evolved from our first album *Earthdawn Groves* from a more folk metal sound to a more refined progressive and symphonic metal sound. I would say *Oath of the Storm*, our second full production album, was kind of the gateway leading to where our sound resides now, which is a good mix of melodic death metal, symphonic, black, and folk metal.

AU: How did you get Veli-Matti Kananen (Kalmah), Mattias Sippola (Atavistia) to be guests on the EP?

MC: We actually played with Kalmah a couple of years ago at a local show when they were touring. We contacted Veli-Matti directly, and he was stoked to participate on this EP. For Mattias, we have been following Atavistia for a few years already. It was always our idea to make some kind of collaboration, and it turned out great. Mattias also helped in improving some orchestral

with anybody else as he has grown familiar with our sound and we are aligned on the results we want to achieve.

AU: What would you like fans to walk away with after hearing this EP?

MC: This EP aims at transporting the listener into a darker dimension, where shadows lurk and where deities reign supreme. The four songs are a succession of different events based on the realm of the dead, a falling pantheon and a gloomy curse for adventurers who travelled to a place where they are not welcome. It is considered a pretty full experience with hints of progressive metal, black metal, and refined symphonic orchestration to push this whole dimension to a new level. We want fans to walk away with an



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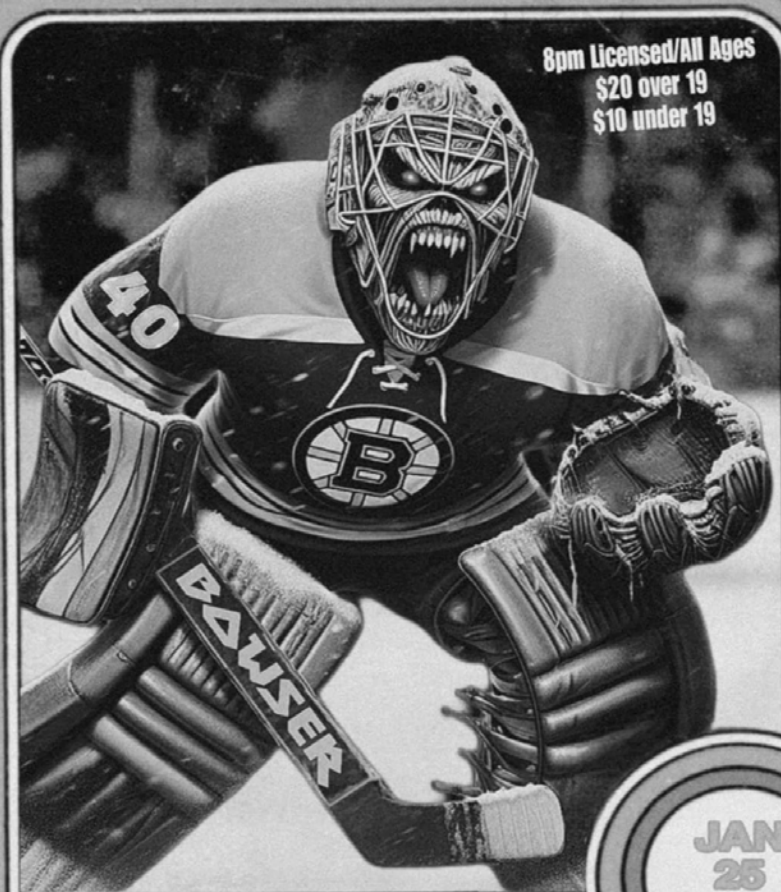
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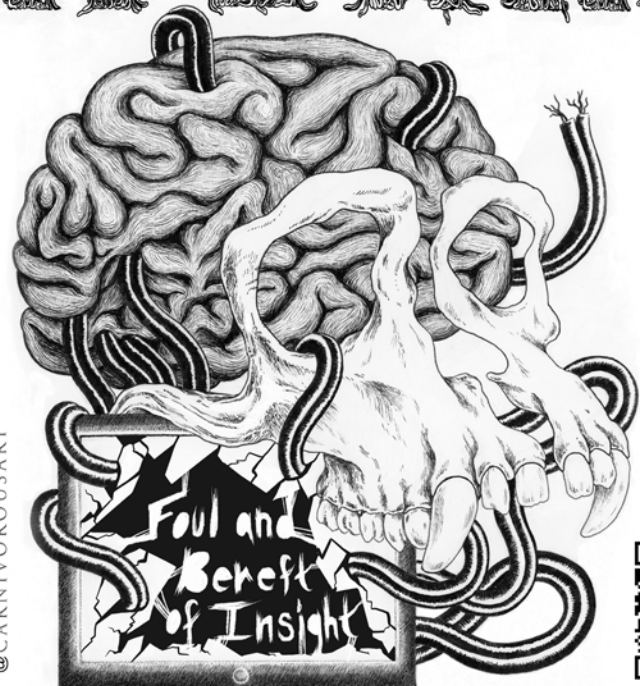
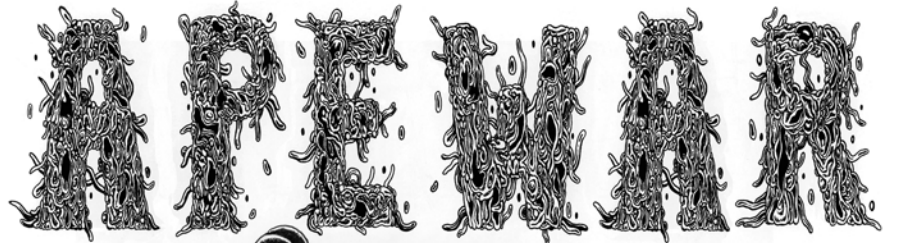
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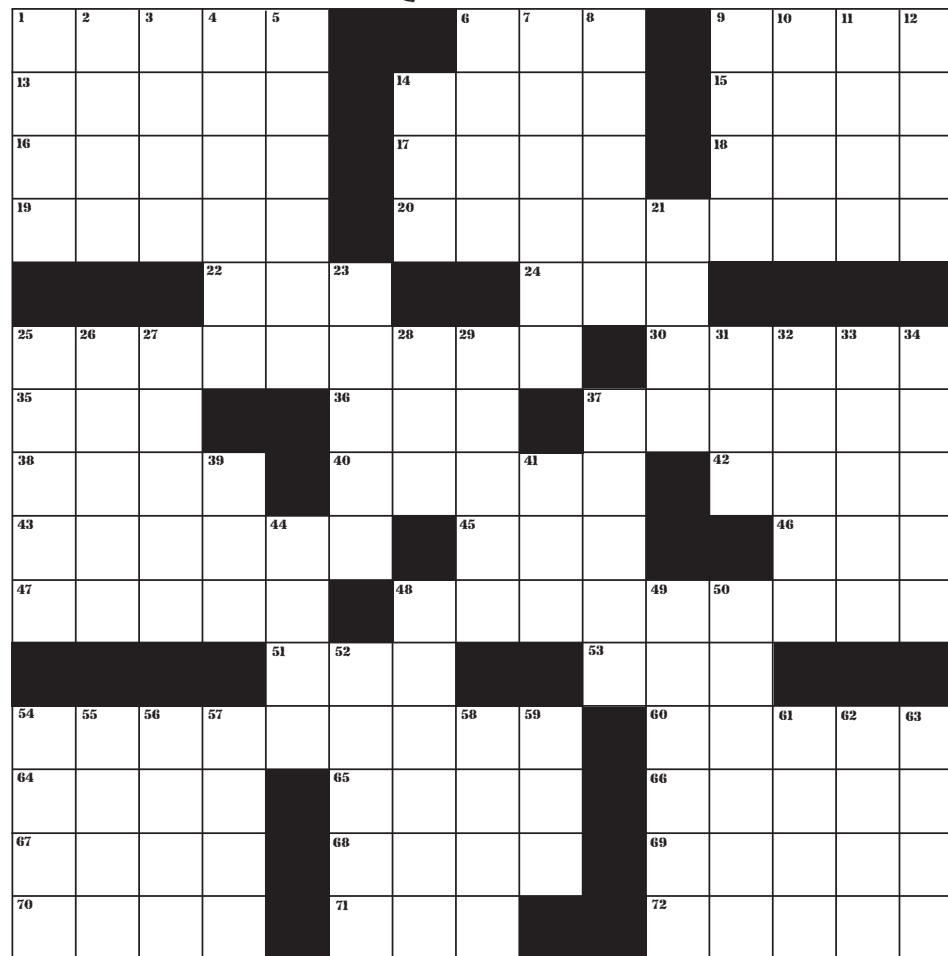
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ACROSS

1. Underwater gear
6. NYC hardcore band gets a new start singing about "Maxim" and "FHM?" (with 9-across)
9. See 6-across
13. Punk band Die Toten _____
14. Give. Temporarily
15. Info at airports
16. Change
17. Heroine of PEI?
18. _____ alone
19. Type of eel
20. DC hardcore band gets a new start singing about how it feels to grow up and have kids?
22. "_____ heard."
24. _____ Radio-Canada
25. Vancouver Punks get a new start singing about bartenders?
30. Hit for M. Night Shyamalan
35. Actress de Armas
36. "_____ of Spades"
37. British Punks get a new start reviewing fast food restaurants?
38. Smart Simpson
40. Deep rift
42. It's known for a towering mistake
43. '77 British Punks get a new start passing laws? (with 'The')
45. Franco-Canadian media giant
46. Home of 13-across (abbr.)
47. Parts
48. Original Oi band gets a new start making their fans unhappy?
51. Smear of The Germs
53. LA Post-Punk band gets a new start by opening a tanning salon? (with 67-across)
54. UK Punk band gets a new start working as exterminators?
60. "Bad" for Bill and Ted
64. Billy _____
65. Bear constellation(s)
66. Arnold and Danny 1988 film
67. See 53-across
68. Tennis score
69. Tilts
70. Word sung twice by Doris Day
71. Same meaning (abbr.)
72. Beliefs and aspirations



CROSSWORD NO. 110

DECEMBER, 2024

DOWN

1. _____ 69
2. Crooner Perry
3. Drug consumer
4. Carcass guitarist
5. "If you're happy _____..."
6. _____ fide
7. Mark Zuckerberg's sister, and namesakes
8. The eve of A.D.
9. Really big in ads
10. It's yours (Fr.)
11. Toronto's Negative _____
12. Fast fliers
14. Content producer _____ bible
21. Global domination game
23. Old Apples
25. More Gothlike?
26. Int'l org. based in Vienna
27. John Cleese in Fawlty Towers
28. Scottish exclamation
29. "Excellent!"

31. Game console released in 2004
32. Character on a 31-down
33. The Father of Modern Theatre
34. Ivan and Nicholas, for example
37. Actor Sharif and namesakes
39. Frehley of Kiss
41. "Law and Order: _____"
44. Recipe amt.'s
48. Well-built
49. Understated
50. _____-all
52. Shades of blue-green
54. PA basics
55. Eric who created The Rutles
56. Yard in Yamaska
57. Where Napoleon was exiled
58. Phonetic alphabet phrase
59. Vapid of Screeching Weasel
61. Silent film star Lillian
62. Do _____ others...
63. Snake's warning

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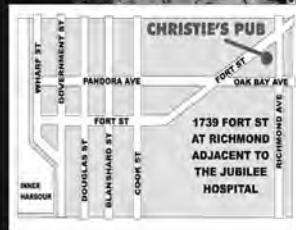
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LONGSHOT MUSIC



Dear Saskatoon,

I saw a man that looked like Jack Nicholson at the end of *The Shining* in the Giant Tiger parking lot yesterday. I really was hoping for more of an Encino Man scenario, but sadly no Pauly Shore, just a frozen old crazy guy.

As the city remains a desolate, frozen wasteland for the next few months, some bands are still braving the elements in hopes of getting a couple drink tickets and Covid variant from some coked up drunk guy, spit talking directly into your mouth. The smell of the cold air and cigarette

smoke is still comforting to me. A lot of amazing memories were created growing up in this place during the winter months. I mean, probably. I have no fucking clue. You guys can remember things? I was created in an underground bunker during a series of illegal genetic experiments, conducted by the government in an undisclosed facility on the outskirts of Gonzabar. My human form was scheduled for incineration due to a laundry list of flaws in my operating system, one of those flaws is a selective memory, so thanks for bragging about how you can remember stuff good. I honestly don't even remember what this article was about.

As the dreaded time rapidly approaches earlier every year, all the fine citizens of the town are ready to consume. Spending cash they don't got on crap they don't need. I gotta chew a Clonazepam and an edible just thinking about stepping foot into a shopping mall or department store in December. I would rather go to the beach with a dozen razor sharp chef knives and stick them in the sand, handle first, leaving the blades exposed. Then, just as the sun is setting on the beautiful lake of Ganzobar, take off my shoes, get a running start and just kick the shit out of the knives. Blades between all my toes, kicking as hard as possible. Run barefoot and kick the blade of a knife like a football. I'd rather do that than ever go to the mall.

I want to encourage you all to stay strong in these times of devastation and turmoil. Don't buy what they are selling. Only purchase what you need, and if you can't afford it, shoplift from Wal-Mart and if someone tries to stop you, bite them in the face. The adrenalin of ingesting human flesh will make you run faster. Put your money back into

SASKATOMB

your community or your own survival.

Out of all the things humans want to cancel, how has this bullshit, Christian-bred tradition turned capitalist utopia managed to fly under the radar without question? If you must procreate, or even if it's an accident, consider raising your children without Christmas or birthdays. Any holiday that brings a sense of joy created by needless consumerism. Finding happiness in nothing is true fulfillment. Also, Santa isn't real.

IS IT WORTH IT?



Now that you are a cannibal from eating some of the Wal-Mart worker, do you really need a giant turkey dinner? Why is that a staple of numerous human traditions? Turkey? Pilgrims? You know what? I really don't fucking care, it's fucking stupid. You can have turkey whenever the fuck you want. Cook it on a Thursday in the summertime. Make a broth. I see some gravy joining the party. I thought they only ate fish and bread in the Bible and if you were bad, you got to suck

on an old sock soaked in vinegar.

The Grinch was a quitter and science has proven there is no way Mary was a virgin. So that means Jesus was a bastard. I feel sorry for anyone that requires gratitude in the form of material possessions. Just be good to each other, ignore anyone that isn't on your team and set fire to the occasional cop car. Has anyone ever really known someone in high school that had a sexual relationship with a hot teacher? I've never met anyone that has that story tell. Huh. Only in the movies.

Merry Christmas, and happy 20th Anniversary to Absolute Underground!

Love forever,

Martin Splatterpants (Poached Recs)

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ATOMIS

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?

Bryan Buss: My name is Bryan Buss, and I played bass in ATOMIS from 2010-2018. I currently run Leroux Studios in Calgary, AB; a private music school.

AU: ATOMIS put out a box set of your entire catalogue of music in memory of your passing drummer Nathan Navetto, how does it feel to release this immortal tuneage for people to discover?

BB: After having one single song available for the last 14 years, it's been extremely therapeutic going through the archives and finally getting this out for Nathan. Now there are 27 new tracks

for people to dive in, and to connect with the amazing visionary Nathan was!

AU: What would you like longtime fans and new fans to walk away with their listening experience of this box set?

BB: The recommended way to listen is to start with the four-track self-titled, go on to Welcome to the Void (Nathan's album), and finish up with the Live Demos (songs we performed live from 2010-2014).

For longtime fans of our singular track, "Maelström", it finally opens up the world of ATOMIS and answers any questions or assumptions from the last 15 years. For new fans, it's a massive amount of work

to pick apart and imagine what it could have been.

AU: For those unfamiliar with Nathan Navetto, what would you like to tell readers about him and your time with him as a musician in the band?

BB: Nathan was beyond a drummer. He was the best artist I have personally worked with, and perhaps the most hilarious. We spent many nights (hours after band practice ended) talking and dreaming of the future of ATOMIS, cry-laughing about the silliest things, or getting deep on whatever challenges we were personally having. As a bassist, it was an absolute pleasure locking in with him in the band, and his very creative beats. Anyone who met Nathan remembered him, and he was great at making you feel seen and heard. In the box set, we loaded with all of the visual art of his that we could find. Just know that there are likely dozens of songs of his still unheard, and hundreds of drawings, paintings, etc.

AU: What was your favourite song to perform with Nathan Navetto?

BB: I have to say "They Thought It to Be Impossible, So They Did It". It's on the Live Demos album. We locked in during the bridge in the best way.

AU: Will the band do a live performance?

BB: We just can't find a way to do it without him, so the Void box set will be our final display.

AU: What can you tell us about the beautifully directed music video "12 Chains"?

BB: We have the amazing Doug Cook, our good friend, to thank for everything. Nathan and Doug had some plans about a decade ago for a music video, but just like

CALGARY CARNAGE

with the albums, it was just too hard to get to the finish line. Then out of the blue in early 2024, Doug reached out saying he just had to make it. He hired actors, costume designers, miniature set designers, and a mini-volume/green screen, and created a world that is "12 Chains". There's a making of on our YouTube page that has to be seen. Once the video was in motion, I knew it was time to just release the entire archives.

AU: Anything else you would like to add for our readers?

BB: Call your friends, don't lose touch, keep making art, and laugh as hard as possible.

atomismusic.bandcamp.com





Pepper Spray

Interview by John Carlow

Anyone on the naughty list this Xmas season might find a travel size bottle of Pepper Spray in their stockings. (Word is this band has an inside connection to the old dude in red.) AU caught up with these newly gathered wandering minstrels to talk about music and plans for the new year.

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourselves

Pepper Spray: Kate – Vocals – SHE

Hayler – Guitar – Hung Up, ex-The Zap Straps, ex-Orange Krush

Elena – Bass – Hung Up, Baxter and the Coagulators

Pauly Valentine – Drums – Angry Snowmans, ex-The Zap Straps, ex-BOLÖC

AU: When and how did Pepper Spray come about?

PS: In December 2023 we played an Adicts tribute set, and we had so much fun fucking around we morphed into an originals project.

AU: The name?

PS: We stole it from Willy Jak.

AU: All originals covers... both?

PS: Originals, but we slip in the odd Adicts song to remind people of where we came from.

AU: What's bands would you remind people of?

PS: Come to our show and you can be the judge of that.

AU: Who does the writing... music... words...?

PS: It's very ritualistic. We turn the lights down, join hands, and let Satan speak through us in the form of punk rock. When we come to, Hayler's usually got a riff and Kate's got some lyrics. You know, the usual band collaborative stuff.

AU: What are the songs about?

PS: Grumpy old punks, bubble baths, cults, etc.

AU: A song you'd like PS to do a cover of?

PS: The Angry Snowmans do a cover of a cover and we wanna cover that.

AU: Ambitions for this band? Plans for the road ahead?

PS: More gigs, writing more music, record an album.

AU: Bands you'd like to play with.

PS: White Collar, Knife Manual, and D.O.A.

AU: Thoughts on the local scene?

PS: It's electric and it means everything to us.

AU: Lottery wish for the local underground scene in Victoria?

PS: Big shout out to The Phoenix for being a wicked venue that embraces alternative music and the chaos, but we need more venues. Any takers?

AU: If asked, would you be able to do an acoustic performance of your songs?

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PS: If it doesn't include mushrooms and a bonfire, we're out.

AU: How do people find the band online?

PS: For socials, Pepper Spray on Facebook.

AU: Final thoughts?

PS: Come see us rock out with The Angry Snowmans on Dec 20th at Moon Under Water!

Photo by Finding Charlotte Photography







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BornBroken

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: It's been a while since we last spoke to you for 2018's *The Years of Harsh Truths and Little Lies*, what's been going on with the band these days?

BornBroken: Since the *Years of Harsh Truths and Little Lies*, BornBroken has undergone a major transformation with a new lineup and fresh material. We released our third album, *Am I Invisible*. It's been a busy and exciting time for us, and we're thrilled to share this new chapter with our fans!

AU: What can you tell us about *Am I Invisible*? It's a new lineup, and we see guitarist Mike Decker has taken over on vocals; how has that transition been?

BB: *Am I Invisible* is a deeply personal and introspective album that explores themes of isolation, invisibility, and the struggle to find significance in a world that often overlooks the unnoticed. The title track captures the essence of the album with its raw energy and haunting chorus, making it both an anthem for those who feel unseen and a bold statement of our evolution as a band.

The transition to a new lineup has been both challenging and invigorating. I, Michael Decker now stepping into the vocal role wasn't that big of a shift. After years of being the guitarist, the only thing different for myself is the fact I'm fronting a band again after 20 years. That change brought a seamless dynamic and an even deeper connection to the material, as I have written most of the lyrics for BornBroken.

The new members (well not so new really, Mike Marino joined in late 2018 and Carlos Ojeda in 2020) have breathed a different life into BornBroken. Everyone brought their own style and energy, which helped shape this album into something we're incredibly proud of. It's a raw, aggressive, and honest reflection of who we are now, both musically and personally. This album is

more than a release— it's a statement of resilience and reinvention.

AU: How was it to work with the legendary producer Christian Donaldson (Cryptopsy)?

BB: Working with Christian Donaldson was an incredible experience. His reputation precedes him— being a Juno Award-winning producer and a member of Cryptopsy, he knows exactly how to bring out the best in heavy music. For *Am I Invisible*, his technical expertise and artistic insight elevated every aspect of the record.

Christian has an amazing ability to capture the raw power of a band while ensuring every detail in the mix shines through. He pushed us

to refine our sound, focusing not just on the heaviness but on how the emotion and intensity of the music translate in the final product. His dedication and precision really helped us realize the full potential of these songs. On top of that, his calm demeanour in the studio made the process smooth, even during the most intense sessions. It was a collaborative effort, and Christian's input played a huge role in shaping *Am I Invisible* into what it is. This album wouldn't sound the same without his touch— it's heavy, raw, and polished in all the right ways.

AU: The album touches upon everyday fears and everyday joys... and fans say it has really helped them cope with the negatives of life, how does it feel to hear your music reaching people in that way?

BB: Hearing that is incredibly humbling and fulfilling. That's what it's all about for us— creating something meaningful that connects with people on a personal level. When fans share how *Am I Invisible* has helped them navigate their struggles



or find solace in its themes, it reinforces why we pour so much of ourselves into our music.

This album was born out of raw emotions, fears, and joys we've experienced ourselves, so knowing that others can relate and find comfort in it is powerful. It's a reminder that we're all navigating similar struggles, even if they look different from the outside. Music has a unique way of bridging those gaps and creating a sense of solidarity, and we're honoured to be part of that connection. Ultimately, it drives us to keep pushing ourselves creatively, knowing our work can make a positive impact. If *Am I Invisible* can provide even a

moment of relief or strength for someone, then we've done what we set out to do.

AU: You've opened for some well-known names this year. Who was your favourite?

BB: Along with Threat Signal, playing with Bastardane, Otto, and Within the Ruins has been an incredible experience. Each of these bands brings their own flavour and energy to the stage, making every show unforgettable. Within the Ruins' technical mastery and groove are always jaw-dropping to watch

up close, while Bastardane and Otto both bring fresh energy that keep the metal scene alive and thriving. Sharing stages with such talented acts young and old, inspires us to push harder and elevate our own performance. It's been a privilege to stand alongside all of them this year!

AU: You put out a great music video for "Am I Invisible"; how did you decide on Chris Kells (The Agonist) directing your wicked video?

BB: Chris Kells is a good friend of ours, it was an easy choice for us. He also did our last video, "Harsh Truths and Little Lies". His work speaks for itself— his visual storytelling and ability to capture the raw essence of a song are unmatched. We've

MONTREAL MASSACRE

always admired his work with The Agonist and other bands in the metal scene, so when it came time to create the video for *Am I Invisible*, he was the perfect fit. The single needed someone who could bring intensity and nuance to the screen. Chris immediately understood this and elevated it with his creativity. His direction not only brought the song to life but also amplified its emotional impact, creating something that feels just as haunting and powerful visually as it does musically. Collaborating with him was an absolute pleasure, and the final product reflects his talent and dedication. We couldn't be happier with how it turned out!

AU: You have limited edition vinyl copies of the album? How do you feel about taking this route? Where can fans pick it up?

BB: Yes, we have limited-edition vinyl copies and we're really excited about it! There's something timeless about vinyl— it brings a sense of tangibility and nostalgia that connects fans to the music on a deeper level. Taking this route was an intentional decision to give our fans something special. The visuals of this album really lend themselves to the larger canvas of a vinyl format, where the artwork can be fully appreciated.

Fans can pick up the limited-edition vinyl through our official store and at shows.

AU: Any plans for the band to tour in 2025?

BB: We're definitely looking at hitting the road in 2025! Right now, we're in the early stages of planning, so keep an eye out for announcements on all our social platforms. We're aiming to make it a mix of local shows, regional runs, and hopefully some international dates as well if they present themselves. If there's a city you'd love to see us in, let us know— we're always listening to our fans when it comes to deciding where to play! Thanks for your support, and we'll see you soon— hopefully in person on tour!

linktr.ee/bornbroken



World On Alert

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: Welcome to Absolute Underground Magazine, who are you and what do you do?

World On Alert: My name is Gino La Posta. I am based out of Montreal, Canada. I have been playing bass and writing music for almost 25 years. I have been in many local Montreal bands like Void Within, and CroMagnum. I am the bassist and founder of the progressive metal band World On Alert.

AU: You released World On Alert's self-titled debut EP this past June? What can you tell us about it?

WOA: This EP was pretty much a Covid project. While being in lockdown for those 2-3 years, I just started writing music and it became this. I decided to contact a few friends and family that I have worked with before on other projects and see if they wanted to help with the recording. This EP is the result of that.

AU: World On Alert was created by you (Gino

LaPosta), I see you recruited veterans of the Montreal metal scene for this record, how did you decide who you wanted to invite to be part of this project with you?

WOA: Most of the musicians on this project were people I have worked with before, whether it was working in the studio or playing live. I just went with the musicians whose talents I admired and appreciated

and who would work well with my vision and direction of the project.

AU: You mentioned the lead single "Insecurities" dives deep into your personal battles with introversion and self-assertion, themes also explored on the track "Alone with My Thoughts". How has music been for you as therapy?



WOA: I think playing live is what helped me break out of my shell a bit. It kind of forced me to interact with people and act like a "rockstar" which is a very extroverted thing to do. There is nowhere to hide when you're on stage. Everyone is watching and judging, so it forces you to be the best you can be.

AU: What do you want listeners of this EP to walk away with in message and musically?

WOA: Lyrically, this EP covers many themes from the introverted/asserting yourself theme, as mentioned earlier, as well as tackling and defeating cancer and standing up to the "elite" powers that be who try to control our lives. I

guess you could say that the main theme is just to (hypothetically) fight and stand up for yourself. Don't give up.

Musically, I just hope people enjoy the variety of themes that this EP shows. Each song on this EP has a different feel and shows that you don't have to stick into a bubble. It's okay to be creative and explore/expand.

AU: You had your live debut recently in Montreal, how did it feel to finally bring all these many years of writing and working collectively with your musician friends to bring your music project to life?

WOA: It felt great! It was really nice being on

MONTREAL MASSACRE

stage again. That was the first show I performed since before the pandemic. I had a blast and can't wait to do it again!

AU: Will there be another release coming from World On Alert?

WOA: Yes. I already have some ideas for another WOA release. I will probably start writing that at some point during 2025, and hopefully have something out for 2026. But let's get the music written first.

beacons.ai/worldonalert

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Sandveiss

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?

Sandveiss: We are Maxime Moisan and Luc Bourgeois, respectively bassist and vocalist/guitarist in Sandveiss. We're a melodic heavy rock band from Quebec City that draws influence mainly from stoner rock, metal, prog, and classic rock.

AU: What can you tell us about your new album *Standing in the Fire*? You're quoted as saying "On a technical side, we tried with this album to give the listener maybe a slightly different listening experience than what we offered in the past."

Luc: We wanted to give our sound more texture, depth, and dimension. We felt we needed that kind of production and mix to match the emotion

and sensitive side of the songs. We wanted the music to feel "alive."

AU: You're quoted as saying "We like to hide little things here and there in our recordings," what can fans discover on this new album?

Luc: Yeah, we like to hide little weird sounds and noises in our music. Most of the time, these are really subtle in the mix and barely audible, but they do add to the vibe and feel of the record. For example, there are backward sounds, speech, and screams recorded through guitar pickups. Speaking of which, you can even hear my daughter doing a very haunting scream somewhere on the album. Proud dad moment, haha!

AU: How was it working with Karl Daniel Lidén to mix and master the album?

Maxime: We were already big fans of his past work, both as a musician and for his mixing and mastering projects, so collaborating with him felt

special. The communication was smooth and efficient throughout the process, which made everything flow effortlessly. Karl brought the songs to life in a way that exceeded our expectations, adding his unique colors and depth to the project. It felt like he truly understood the essence of what we were trying to achieve, and his contributions helped elevate the music to another level. We couldn't be happier with the results!

AU: As an indie band, in 2015, you had the honour of playing at the Festival d'été de Québec (FEQ) opening act for High on Fire and Megadeth, and at Heavy Montreal; how were those experiences?

Luc: Playing the Festival d'été de Québec in 2015 was absolutely surreal. Performing on the iconic Plains of Abraham stage is a dream for many musicians, and we're really grateful to have had the opportunity to do so. Not only to play there but also to open for legends like Megadeth and High on Fire— it was insane. Heavy Montreal was just as incredible— a festival that brought together so many high-caliber bands and an entire community of heavy music fans. It's so sad the festival doesn't exist anymore. Being part of that lineup was an absolute honor. Both experiences were milestones for us and a huge inspiration to keep pushing forward as an indie band.

AU: Who's the current band you'd like to open for or tour with?

Maxime: One band that has been a big inspiration for us in recent years is Mastodon. We've always admired their music, and from what we've seen, the guys seem like genuinely nice people. It would be

QUEBEC SIN CITY

amazing to share the stage with them. **Luc:** There are so many great bands we'd love to play with. Personally, I'll be able to check one name off my bucket list very soon. On December 21st, we'll be opening for the prog-metal legends Voivod, one of my favourite bands since I was a kid.

AU: Any upcoming festivals or shows or touring plans in 2025 you can mention for fans to check out?

Maxime: We've got plans for more shows in the province of Quebec throughout 2025, though nothing official we can announce just yet. Looking ahead, one of our goals is to take Sandveiss beyond Canadian borders— Europe is definitely on our radar in the medium term.

AU: How's the Quebec City scene these days?

Maxime: The Quebec City scene is very vibrant right now. There are several venues that support live music, providing great opportunities for local bands to perform. The underground scene is thriving, with a lot of diversity in genres and a strong sense of community. Quebec City has always been known as a "rock" city, and that reputation continues today.

AU: Anything else you would like to add?

Luc: Thank you very much for the opportunity! Our new album *Standing in the Fire* is available on all digital platforms, and we hope

you'll give it a listen. You can also find our vinyl, CDs, and merchandise on Bandcamp.

sandveiss.bandcamp.com.



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CALGARY CARNAGE



Prisoner

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: For those unfamiliar, who are you and what do you do?

Prisoner: Prisoner is your all-around hard rock/metal band. We bring the nostalgia of your classic and traditional rock and metal bands; all while being influenced by modern metal to create a fresh take on metal music without being a carbon copy of legacy acts. We push the mold of a traditional band and write music that fits under the scope of Prisoner, without limiting ourselves to a specific subgenre of rock or metal. Prisoner started in London, Ontario Canada in 2020 when I moved there for audio production school. We built a name for ourselves in the province and played many shows while recording our debut record. I then moved back home to Calgary before moving to Los Angeles, USA to pursue Prisoner full time. The band progressed with varying lineup changes until 2023 when I moved back to Calgary. This is where Prisoner fully solidified a consistent lineup, and we have been rooted here ever since.

AU: You released your EP *House of Cards* this

past August, what can you tell us about it?

Prisoner: This EP is a mashup of everything Prisoner, from trash metal to rock n' roll. We encompassed who we are as a band in roughly 10 minutes of music. These songs work well together as an EP but we didn't think they would make sense going on a full-length album. Each song

is unique lyrically commenting on interpersonal relationships, the people running our society, and how we view the world as individuals.

AU: The EP feels very diverse from old-school thrash to straight up rock over its three tracks; what made you decide to choose these tracks to present yourselves to the metal world?

Prisoner: I don't think it was something that we decided to do intentionally. I will say that it definitely shows our diversity as a band. In our eyes, an EP or singles can have more creative freedom, as there isn't the same demand you get from a full-length record. We write music that we enjoy making. Of course, there is a form of structure that we adhere to as a band. But we are all influenced by various subgenres of rock and metal music. I think having the ability to explore all of those in a way that is unique to us is what makes our band interesting and worth following. You never know what you're going to get and I think metal fans especially respect the authenticity behind that.

AU: "On A Sunday" feels like a very infectious track, what's the story behind writing it?

Prisoner: That song came together very fast. The chorus was written and the opening acoustic

riff was something I had for years. We were going through old voice memos on a trip across Canada and the guys in the band loved it. I originally didn't like it very much, but it grew on me and we wrote the full song in close to 30 minutes. Lyrically, it speaks on interpersonal relationships and how someone can feel that they know you but in reality, there is a very different perception from the truth. You can look at it from various angles and situations as the lyrics don't hold a singular meaning or perspective.

AU: Can we expect the next full-length album in the near future?

Prisoner: In short, yes. We have two more singles coming out this year. "Cover Me" drops on October 4th. We also have a cover of Black Sabbath's "Children of the Grave" coming very soon as well. We are already working on our second full-length record, and we are planning to release it sometime next year.

AU: The album artwork really stands out, what can you tell us about the artist behind it?

Prisoner: All of our album art featuring our character "Davey" is hand painted by our close friend John Garrett. He is incredibly talented and brings the story of Davey to life. Each piece is painted on a canvas, which is then photographed and digitized. We feel our visual artwork is just as important as our music and combining them together to create a setting that is relatable. In a world of quick turnaround AI-generated artwork, we wanted to be original, and we feel that taking the time to create the artwork in an organic way makes what we do that much more authentic.

AU: There are a few Prisoner bands out there, what do you think sets you apart as the Canadian band from the others?



AU: How's the Calgary metal scene these days?

Prisoner: The local scene is strong and always growing. Being a part of so many music scenes across North America, we have learned that it is about community and helping lift each other up. Rock and metal being a niche genre as it is, won't survive with the old-school mindset of conquering everything alone. We all love music because it makes us feel something and we are passionate enough to make

our own music. The community in Calgary is no different and we are very lucky to call Calgary our home.

AU: If you could have one guest artist appear vocally or a solo guitarist, who would it be?

Prisoner: I would love to work with Marty Friedman. His playing style and ability have influenced everyone in the band and I think getting the opportunity to work with him would be legendary.

AU: Any tour plans or upcoming shows to mention?

Prisoner: We have some things in the works to get out on the road for 2025.

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Uncle Outrage

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are you talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Nils Rasmussen: My name is Nils Rasmussen and I've been the vocalist, guitarist, programming the drum machines, playing the synths/samplers, recording and mixing my own songs for the band Uncle Outrage. I would describe UO as electro-industrial punk but in all honesty, the music doesn't quite fit in any genre. I'm based out of Edmonton, but the band has got fans all over the world now— with an especially strong following in Russia for reasons I've never figured out.

AU: Give us a brief history of Uncle Outrage, if possible. How long have you been doing this and what are you all about?

NR: I've been having fun making music for over 20 years now. I honestly couldn't see myself not making music. The first studio album, *Bonecock vol. 1* came out in 2004 and I just released a greatest hits album on vinyl which can be purchased at Cacophony Clan Records on Bandcamp. I started making the music almost as a joke, only posting the songs on mp3.com in the early 2000s, just because my old computer didn't have enough space to store them on the hard drive. Without even meaning to, the band started to quickly garner a fast-growing fanbase so I decided to scale up the production and have been going strong ever since.

AU: I know Uncle Outrage tours as a four-piece, but is produced as a one-man project. Can you tell us more about that? What do the other three members take on instrumentally?

NR: As the band grew in popularity, I began getting requests to play live shows on a near weekly basis. I recruited my best friends, (who



happened to also be musicians) to take care of the instruments so I can run around on stage and really have fun with the audience while I'm singing. Eventually, a lot of the shows became crowd sing-alongs which blew my mind at first. Having an entire crowd singing along to lyrics you wrote is seriously one of the best feelings in the world. I'd take it over sex any day.

AU: What's your songwriting process like?

NR: When I start writing a tune— if it can't get stuck in your head, I don't keep at it. Rather than trying to impress with grandiose guitar solos or anything technically impressive, I completely focus on the melody. After I have a tune to work

from, I find a vocal melody and then use it to figure out how to make the lyrics. After that, it's all recorded, mixed, and mastered in my bedroom studio. I became a certified audio engineer back in 2006. I can only imagine how much money I've ended up saving on studio time elsewhere.

AU: What kind of gear do you use to create your sound?

NR: For drums and synths, I typically use a program named Reason made by a company called Propellerhead. I also have used the app, Caustic, which I load with my own custom samples. Even though it's ancient, my favourite synth for live stuff is a Roland XP-60. It has a lot of totally unique sounds that are easy to manipulate and it has incredible sensitive to how much pressure your fingers press the keys. I also use an MS2000. I started off using a three-octave kids' toy Casio keyboard which lacked the high 'A' key. This made it so in a lot of my early stuff, I was forced to stick to musical scales which didn't make use of A.

AU: Who or what are some of your biggest inspirations for your music?

NR: The band Uncle Outrage is most often compared to Mindless Self Indulgence. I am a huge fan of MSI but UO's sound is actually pretty different and distinct. Because of this uniqueness, it's pretty much the only band that sounds even close. Other groups that I would say were heavy influences were across the board. Babyland, Nine Inch Nails, Future of the Left, Ohgr, The Faint, Ramshackle Glory, Blink 182, Wednesday Night Heroes, Nirvana, Crass, PT Grimm, and even Fiona Apple for how she structures her songs.

AU: Do you have any shows or tours planned or being planned?

NR: Not at the moment. I've done shows all up and down Alberta but haven't done anything outside of Edmonton for at least the last five years now. As fun as the live performances are, I'm happiest producing

SHR-EDMONTON

new material in my home studio. I have always speculated that, at least in the case of bands— exposure is infinitely more valuable than whatever few bucks made on touring in the case of bands like mine.

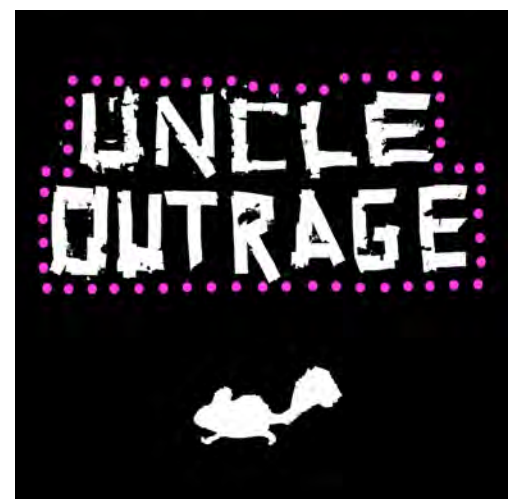
AU: Any plans for the holidays this year?

NR: I was raised Catholic until I left the church at age 14. Now, I am the leader of a small nameless cult which I would prefer not to talk about. Regardless, Christmas is not one of our festivals. We spend much of our time throughout each winter all focusing on what the cult is striving to change via psychic influence. The cult is not what you're here to discuss but I'll just say, we've done some amazing, kick-ass shit.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

NR: I'm not sure how Santa views being in a cult, so I suppose I'll find out if he conclusively favours my faith by what I find in my stocking when I visit my family for the obligatory dinner.

uncleoutrage.com



December 2024

Fri 13thEarly Show: Red Earth Theory, Pixie Stix, Avrey Cochrane7PM ALL AGES BLAKBAR

Sat 14thBallpark Franks, The Galacticas, The Sharp Sharp Knives9PM 18+ BLAKBAR

Thur 19thRockin 4 Dollars: Holiday Hangout8PM 18+ BUCKINGHAM

January 2025

Sat 11thHi-Light Festival 2025 Line-up Reveal Show & Festival Fundraiser7PM ALL AGES THE AVIARY

Thur 30thMidnight Peg, Bridgeland, Panic Pixie, Petrichord7PM ALL AGES THE AVIARY

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Interview by Demonika

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what is your role in Berserker?

Jon Vornbrock -Vocals/Guitar

AU: Who is Berserker made up of? How did you get together?

JV: Brian Kustersky-Guitar, Aaron Herdman-Drums, Jeff Vanden Elzen-Bass, and Cody Grisdal plays lead guitar, but we don't know where he is at the moment.

We formed in 2010, but it was short lived. Initially there were 11 songs but only 7 of them were recorded on a flip phone at a live gig. We reformed in 2020 to finish what we started. Had to rewrite a few songs, but ultimately we succeeded and independently released the album *Hollywoodland*. Jeff and Aaron joined the band after the first record, probably because they know Berserker is better than their former band JIL, which was the best Lethbridge band back in the

90's.

AU: Who are the biggest influences for the sound?

JV: Refused, Snapcase, Raised Fist, Amen, and recently Tomahawk have been big influences. Our first single for the song *Problem, Reaction, Solution* was heavily inspired by the rhythms of Tomahawk's album *Tonic Immobility*. We know we'll never be as good as any of those bands, but it's pretty fun trying.

AU: The new album *The State of The Empire* was just released this past August, can you tell us a bit about the album and how the release has been received?

JV: Musically it's more diverse than our first record. We've been branching out a bit and will continue to do so in the future, so don't be surprised. Lyrically it's full of questions nobody thought to ask, or maybe the questions people are afraid to ask. I know we all just want to go out, see a live show, unwind, and have some fun, but also,

maybe there's a hidden world full of dark secrets. The feedback from friends and fans has been very positive. We've had emails and messages from people who all seem to have a different favourite track, so that's always nice. We don't really sound like a lot of other bands, so I think we've been able to draw people to our music even when we overplay our hometown. We talked about not doing that, but hey, it's easy and it's fun. Essentially that's what we're shooting for.

AU: What does the writing process look like for Berserker?

JV: Everyone contributes bits and pieces to the process, but usually I'm sitting down with Brian on acoustic guitars and we write riffs until something sticks. Once there's something catchy, we add to it or jam with everyone until we get the structure right. Lyrics are always last, 95% of the time.

AU: What are some goals for the band?

JV: Pretty much everything we're doing now, making records and playing shows. This band has been propelling itself with the whole process of art/records/booking shows. We had a huge contribution from Carlin Blackrabbitt, with MomentsFest Records helping us release the new album *The State of the Empire* on vinyl.

Eventually we'd like to tour out east, but for now we're still working out playing everywhere we can in western Canada. Hopefully we'll get that sorted out for spring/summer 2025. We have a 2 song single in the bag, ready to go. Currently we are working on an experimental 5 song EP, so we're not slowing down by any means.

AU: What can guests expect at a live show?

JV: Good question. Between jobs and other availability issues it almost seems like every Berserker show is different from the last. Sometimes Jeff isn't available so Brian will play bass, sometimes Cody can't make it, so I'll have to play guitar and won't be able to roam around swinging a microphone or anything. But it's always loud, fast, and ripping. It's usually a 40 minute set because, hey, we're not in our 20's anymore. I don't recall anyone saying our band

DEATHBRIDGE

sucks, so that's a good sign.

AU: Any upcoming shows you'd like to plug?

JV: We're in Edmonton Dec 14th for the Jaks Yuletide Bonanza VII at The Starlite Room. After that we'll hibernate, record this 5 Song EP, and hope to see everyone in the spring time.

AU: Anything else you'd like to say?

JV: Think for yourself and don't believe the hype. Also, has anyone seen Cody?

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Photo Credits: Group shot - Gabe Olson,
Live shot at Dickens, Calgary, AB. - Shane Rempel





Infrared

Interview by Asher Thrasher

Absolute Underground: Welcome to Absolute Underground Magazine, who are you and what do you do?

Armin Kamal: My name is Armin Kamal and I am the lead singer and one of two guitar players in the band Infrared.

AU: Infrared has a long history in Canadian thrash and the last few years has been making a resurgence. How is it being a band in the 2000s compared to coming out in the heyday of thrash in the '80s/'90s? along with seeing the next generation of thrash?

AK: Honestly, I wouldn't say it's that much different. Metalheads haven't really changed. They are as into it now as they were then. The big difference for us is rather than writing music during the birth of a new genre, now we are

carrying a torch to that genre and time. Now we have more resources, experience, and technology to sound how we want to.

AU: You have been consistently releasing new music since 2016; what can you tell us about this latest album *Manifestation*?

AK: *Manifestation* was a pretty fun and fast writing process. We started with the artwork and only a few riff ideas. We challenged ourselves to write the album based on the artwork and to streamline the songs. So, the album literally manifested itself from the artwork.

AU: The band used AI for its album cover, what's your take on using AI for images and videos these days? You're quoted as saying "One of the songs even touches on the danger of AI, so there is some irony there between using AI for the album cover and then writing a fictitious future warning of its dangers."

AK: Just like any technology, it can greatly

improve our lives, but with it also comes potential dangers. Right now, you can use it to quickly generate documents, artwork, and videos. Sometimes it's a good starting point and saves you a lot of time and actually produces something very cool, like our artwork and some extremely disturbing videos that just look really cool. It's just another way to create. But it can also be used to manipulate, and spread misinformation, and when we get to a point where it has consciousness, then that opens up a whole new level of concern. Having said all that, we will never use it to write music or lyrics. That is too deeply personal to start enlisting help from AI. To me, that would seem lazy.

AU: You have put out some top-notch music videos to support this album, which one was your favourite to make and who directed them?

AK: Wow, thank you. You know what's funny? We have, for a long time now, produced all our own videos. I typically direct and edit them. We have had Troy Smith, our road manager, my son Sebastian, myself, and Mike from the band shoot when we are not in the shots. On top of that, we use cell phones and a Go Pro to get the job done. A lot of the magic happens in the editing. As for my favourite vid off this album, I think I like "Concuss". It's a departure and has a cool theme.

AU: You have performed alongside some of the top-tier thrash bands over the years, who was your most memorable?

AK: Oh man, don't ask us to play favourites. They were all amazing to play with. We have a great affection for fellow Canadian thrasher Sacrifice and Razor. Exciter was an honour to play with. Flotsam and Jetsam was surreal. Anvil, well that was the most surreal for me. I loved playing with Venom, Inc. all those opportunities are etched in our brains. We cannot pick one over the other.

AU: Live and Recordings?

AK: I think we will always record as long as we are having fun. We still are. Live just happens as it happens. Either we get a call to play some cool gig (we just had to turn an awesome offer down as I will be out of the country) or we plan our own gigs and make them mini-events to give fans more than they get with a bigger opening show where we support some of our heroes. We are planning for an infrared exclusive show in the spring. We just had one this past October and it was amazing and fun.

AU: Anything else you would like to add?

AK: We hope people get a chance to hear us and spread the word if they dig what they hear. In a sea of music, word of mouth is still your best advertisement. Thanks to those who have, and continue to support us.

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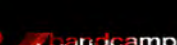
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Black Ends

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous for?

Black Ends: We're not famous, we are nobodies. This is I am Me are Nicolle, hello.

AU: Give us a brief history of Black Ends. Who's all involved and how did you get together? What are you all about as a band?

BE: Ben and I met in Idaho while spelunking. We loved music so much that we wrote it in a cave we claimed as our own. Billie just randomly showed up at my house and asked to join the band and I said "OK."

AU: How would you describe your sound to any readers that haven't heard you before?

BE: Probably alternative rock n' roll, but a little

cringe and smells bad.

AU: What's gunk pop?

BE: Gunk pop is what I like to call the music I wanted to create a name for it before anyone else could so I thought of that and ran with it I ran out of breath though and I am laying in the dirt and crying.

AU: In another interview, you talked about training your voice by studying the voices of other singers, such as Thom Yorke, Nina Simone, Julian Casablancas, and Jeff Buckley; what did that research look like? For those of us without the cash to fork out to a proper vocal coach, do you have any tips or advice you'd like to share?

BE: I've probably listened to Jeff and Nina for 1000 plus hours of my life. I just didn't know what I was doing vocally and wanted my voice to be real- the true me and I knew that's what

they were doing. So, I listened and listened until I found my own voice. No need for a vocal coach when music is right there, the only teacher you need.

AU: What other influences (musical or not) inform your sound? Who or what inspires your lyrics?

BE: James Baldwin, Barney the Dinosaur, WC Handy, the dude in the truck who screamed "bitch" at me when he almost hit me with his car, sour patch kids, fighting with my friends after a manic breakdown, love and lust.

AU: I first saw you at Eventide, which was a series of concerts held in Centennial Square over the summer in Victoria, BC. What was that like for you? How did you get booked and how was your trip north of the border?

BE: It was a cool time; we got asked to play and were excited we love Victoria a lot.

AU: You just released your first full-length studio album in October. What can you tell us about *Psychotic Spew* that may not be obvious upon our first listen? Any stories you'd like to share?

BE: I'm not sure. It's an album we created and that we are proud of. Whatever people get out of it is their own story to tell.

AU: What was production like? Did you come up against any obstacles?

BE: Production was amazing. Evan Applebaum is our hero, we love him he is perfect and good. No obstacles- only dreadful managers and their wives.

AU: Are there any songs you're especially stoked on?

BE: "Pour Me" is one of my favourite songs we've written ever.

AU: Any plans for the holidays this year?

BE: My friends are going to cook me and I will be the turkey.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

AMERICAN IMPORT

BE: I cannot answer that because I am currently sniffing glue.

AU: Who's the best local band of 2024?

BE: Flesh Produce is the best and most underrated band in Seattle- my favourite band by far. The Maya Experience is another hidden gem. Everyone knows she's a genius, but they need to give her flowers- the best singer and songwriter in the world, not just Seattle.

AU: Anything else to promote?

BE: Quilcene Lantern is an amazing venue that deserves more credit. Most amazing place/venue I've been to in America honestly. Also, we have new music sooner than you think.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

BE: A good day is love and good day is music live your best and most honest life and breathe music forever if you can.

gunkpop.com

Photo by Kate Richardson





Immortal Force

By The Elusive Shel Byer

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous for?

Immortal Force: Dragos aka. Blackout Culto, guitarist, second vocalist, primary songwriter, and founder of Immortal Force. We play death metal and shit.

AU: For anyone who hasn't heard Immortal Force, describe your sound.

IF: Old ass evil riffs, chaotic yelling, and grunting from the cavernous hells, bass attack of phantasmagoria, maniac drumming by a Slovak man likely named Marián. It all comes together to form something harsh.

AU: You have your debut album *Mystic Seance Unrealities* that was just released on November 22nd via Horror Pain Death Gore Productions. Did I see a titty on the cover?

IF: Listen, I'll come right out and say it. We love tits. Who doesn't, really! As for the cover, we gave total creative control to mastermind painter Paolo Girardi as we knew he'd create something with his ideas and ours that was bizarre and otherworldly and matched the feel of the album. The man doesn't fail! To me, what's on that cover is an illustration of the next phase of life, where this world is succeeded by the next. Physically, spiritually, psychologically. We can only hope at least one titty will be there for mankind. It sure would make that transition easier.

AU: Tell us more about the eye, titty, and asshole on the cover or tell us a little bit about the album and why the meatbags reading this should check it out.

IF: A asshole is definitely in there. For good

measure. We all have one, no shame in flaunting it. Look, plain and simple, the album fucking kills! I rarely listen back to my own music mostly cause once I finish the recording process, I move onto the next project, often with an entirely different mindset and set of goals. But I must have listened back to *Mystic Seance Unrealities* a dozen times by now since it was mastered. Tons of crushing parts in there. It's death metal in the old vein made by guys who have, like, 80 years of combined death metal listening under their loosened belts. We didn't just drop out of a hardcore band yesterday after hearing *Cause of Death*. This is real shit.

AU: There's a severe vocal delivery change between the new album and your 2020 demo *Into The Necrosphere*. Did Lawless find himself?

IF: He did, but I should add that the demo is mostly him on vocals, and everything we've done after that, including this album, is all of us on vocals. We even had a few guest vocalists on short parts. Lawless' vocals are better than ever, and he has a vocal tone I've never heard anywhere before, which is why I asked him to join in the first place! Of course, his talking voice now is shittier than ever, which is kind of what happens. Same with me. I sound like a corpse being made.

AU: Your new video for the lead single "Mass



Murder Meat Market" is interesting. Whose parents' basement is that and whose body parts is Depresor playing the drums with?

IF: That would be Mr. and Mrs. Orlaf Pufamenko, from the depths of the Slovak village Horné Saliby. We were all playing various limbs that day. I am unsure of their origins.

AU: What do you guys do with the mass murder meat that doesn't get sold?

IF: I can only imagine the reptilian elites take the leftovers home and use it to make hearty soups they jar for the cold months.

AU: Blackout Culto, give us your best black out story and don't hold back - this isn't Reader's fucking Digest.

IF: There's been some really good ones, and some really bad ones. One of my favourites is when my buddy Mike and I started drinking before noon in the suburbs one fine October day, drank all fucking day, then in the evening I went to the taproom where I drank a shitload of IPAs, got knocked in the mouth by some tweaker in crackville, with my buddy David holding me back from seeking revenge, and we walked to the Bölzer show where I slammed more drinks and eventually passed out on the stage while Bölzer was playing.

Apparently, their drummer Fabian (great guys, by the way; I met them in Montreal a year before) yelled out to "get this man off the stage." I was kicked out and barely standing, outside, starting fights. Keep in mind I don't remember anything after getting to the show. I woke up early morning on a porch a few blocks away from the venue with two cops and a man in his bathrobe standing above me, all of them telling me to fuck off, that I was on private property. In the words of one of the greats: "131 proof, bud. Straight up, I'm fuckin' wasted."

AU: The song "Open Casket Gangbang" got me super horny. Who are your ideal dead people to be in a gangbang with?

IF: Yeah, that song will do that! Pišan Maczny for sure. Who else, let's see. Oh, Melmaj "Marius" Frimorero. What a porker! I think that's about it. Just those two real persons.

AU: Dogs or cats?

IF: Pussy all the way, man! Woof!

AU: Peeled. Impaled. Gutted. Richard

BENEATH THE WHEEL

Simmons, Pauly Shore and Weird Al (fuck marry kill).

IF: I would marry, fuck, and kill all of them. For the life insurance.

AU: We're at a time when a lot of bands are just recycling a lot of the same old shit and not really doing anything different or interesting, whether people eat it up or not. Can you give us three up-and-coming bands that are killing it and our readers should check out?

IF (Lawless): BURNOUT is #1, they just played the first few shows recently. Amazing stuff, dudes from Teuton and good pals of mine. They sent me the demo tracks months ago and it's somehow the best metal I've heard in fucking years! SYPHON from Calgary, insane hardcore I just fucking love, it's so wild and nasty, check it out! I'm playing the tape to death!

AU: If you had to choose between David Vincent and Chris Barnes to replace Lawless, who would you choose and why?

IF: At this point, probably Chris Barnes, as much as it pains me to say that. We wouldn't even get any rehearsals in, though. It'd just be great to sit around and collectively go EEEEEEEEEEE.

AU: Who is the elusive Dr. Kozsmalt?

IF: He is One, He is All. He is elusive, as is his nature. A man of few words but many skills. His patients are referred to as his "malties" and he is a profound admirer of the gory arts. In songs of the future past, we may speak of his archnemesis, the exuberant Dr. Keftedes, of Thessaloniki infamy.

AU: What's next for Immortal Force?

IF: We wanna get the word out far and wide about this album, as it's something that's been in the works for several years and much hard work has been put into it, specifically by our drummer Depresor, who recorded, mixed, and mastered the whole damn thing! Once we feel like the album's made the rounds, we wanna unleash a vicious EP to all the sick freaks waiting for new shit. It's all recorded. I haven't heard it yet, but I've been told it crushes hard!

AU: Any final words for your meatbags new, old, upcoming, and dead?

IF (Depresor): Get your Bluetooths in, and stay connected!

AU: How do we find you online and where do we pick up a copy of *Mystic Seance Unrealities*?

IF: Our Instagram is @immortalforceband, we have a Facebook page and also a YouTube where we have all of our individual songs uploaded. We have CDs and digital of the album for cheap on our Bandcamp, or you can hit up our label Horror Pain Gore Death.

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INK SLINGERS

Denis Noahbody

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous for?

Denis Noahbody: I am known as Denis Noahbody. I was part of the music scene in Vancouver for years. I have now been tattooing for 31 years, so I have a little bit of reputation in both worlds.

AU: How long have you been an artist? What got you started?

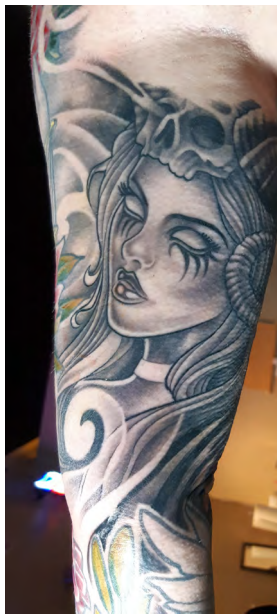
DN: My tattoo career got started when I had a bad tattoo experience with a tattooist in Vancouver. I figured if he could do it, I could do it too. It was such a bad experience that



I figured I could easily be more accommodating and treat people better.

AU: What style of tattooing are you best known for?

DN: As far as styles go, I have done just about everything. Being well-rounded and diverse has been much better for my career than specializing in anything. And I must have been right because after 31 years, I'm pretty consistently



busy.
AU: Who are some of your biggest inspirations in tattooing?

DN: There have been numerous people over the few decades that I really admired their work too many of them to mention... and when you've been tattooing as long as I have, the list is incredibly long. it reminds me always to do my best.

AU: What do you want the readers to know about you as a tattoo artist?

DN: I have a very dark sense of humor and I think I'm incredibly funny.



AU: How do people set up an appointment?

DN: Probably the easiest way is to contact the shop, Scarecrow Ink. or you can look me up on Instagram.

AU: Tell us about the Inuit Tattoo Revitalization Project?

DN: There would be way too much information for this article. Long story short, I was living in the Northwest Territories and I was approached by an Inuit lady asking if I would be interested in helping her Revitalize a lost part of the Inuit culture. She had a lot of interest from people

in her traditional markings and she wanted to pass that along to the rest of the women in her culture. We spent time going to a lot of isolated northern communities tattooing traditionally on Inuit women.

AU: I know you're also a musician. What bands have you been involved with?

DN: I played in a lot of different bands, but nothing really worth mentioning. It's a part of my past. The only musical endeavor I was involved with worth really noting was playing with Chi Pig/SNFU, if you could even really call it that. it was more like going to rehab for Chi and getting him out of Vancouver was my purpose for being involved. Unfortunately, he had developed a taste for amphetamines and crack cocaine.

AU: Do you have any crazy stories from touring with SNFU?

DN: The craziest stuff that ever happened in that band was basically all evolved around Chi and his behaviors and antics. he was a serious bear hunter and really loved to play with his food. The stories are so numerous I could never narrow it down to one.

AU: Do you have any other hobbies outside of tattoos and music?

DN: Besides tattooing and music, my only hobby is hanging out with my dog and working on my Homer dent on my couch. Once in a while I get inspired and I do some airbrushing, but that's about it. I don't drink or do drugs or socialize anymore... I have done my time, so my life is pretty quiet.

AU: Any plans for the holidays this year?



DN: I'm going to go to Alberta, enjoy the snow and cold and see my best female friend. It's going to be pretty quiet.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

DN: I am never naughty and I've never really had anybody call me nice either, other than once roughly 20 years ago.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

DN: My advice to anybody who wants to get tattooed is to do your research and don't let the

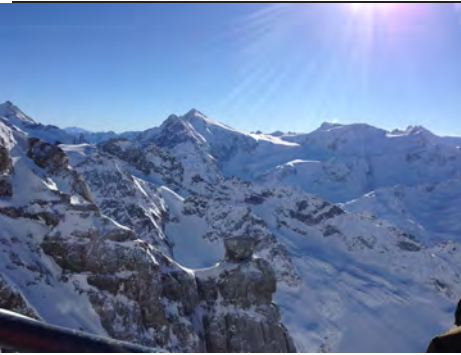
internet fool you; it can be very deceptive and deceiving. Definitely go for quality instead of a good deal. Remember folks, it's permanent.

tattoodemon1@outlook.com

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IG: @denisnoahbody





Ripping the Alps Part Sechs
(That's Six in Swiss)

By Brydo Parker

This is where we will be ending this sechs-part series. A quick catch-up on this epic trip: Ira, myself, and good buddy Tonow landed in Amsterdam and got some grass and proceeded to get very stoned. We had to kill a few hours before

our high-speed train to Paris, where we stayed at the Prince de Galles hotel— a very posh place where Ira caught his underwear on fire trying to dry them on a hot lamp and I flooded the shower and was in wonder at the bidet. We spent new years night partying all over Paris drinking the finest champagne you can buy out of a trunk of a Citroën car. Fireworks, lasers, sight-seeing and snooping around in old tunnels. We got up very early for a 7 am train and missed— by minutes— a terrorist killing spree (the Charlie Hebdo attacks). We proceeded by train up to the French Alps to the Three Valleys Ski area that was voted number one



in the world this year. It's easy to see why. On our first big run, we ducked a rope to grab some side powder. Ira scoped a rock jump, hit it and took a hard hit to his ass. First day curse strikes again. The rock he landed on created a bruise shaped like the world and he proceeded to pull his pants down to show people where we were from for the rest of the trip. The people were awesome, the food extravagant, the cheese stinky, and the beer ice cold and flowing freely. There are places in this world where Canadians are welcome because our ancestors helped out in WWI and WWII and this is one of them.

Next stop was Switzerland we met Jai and Daniel who are from Germany. Jai is from BC originally and his wife is pure German. As soon as Jai showed up, we broke all the rules and still were invited back. The biggest rule in Switzerland is to spend no money. We snuck into a zoo at midnight and scooped our way into a closed-down bar that is an exact replica of an Alpine lodge and sat on the patio and had a nice fire in the fire pit. We got free ski passes at several resorts, rode epic Swiss powder, took trains to places trains should not go, got yelled at and ducked ropes, came close to death several times, and didn't pay a cent.

Then we went on to Austria and found ourselves in a land of no rules. Which totally rules. I arm-wrestled a relative of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Shot off fireworks and went flying off huge avalanche brakes to glorious powder, took a mushroom trip in the rain and rode unreal terrain. You must go to Austria to see what I explain.

Next stop in our Alps tour: Germany and the rules again, but by now we were used to people yelling at us and half the time we were not even in trouble— that's just how they talk. This whole trip was about letting the snow cycles blow us around and hunting down the pow. We are the Powder Seekers and the Alps were experiencing severe snow drought but luckily, we were able to seek out fresh powder for the whole trip. The German resort of Garmisch Partenkirchen, or Ga Pa, is the biggest ski area in Germany and there are lots of resorts, hotels, and restaurants. We just went straight to the tippy top and looked down on everybody and all the resorts. The Zugspitze at 2962 meters high is truly steep, with a 92% gradient on a run called Freefall. On that one run, we experienced every weather pattern and snow type. From steep and deep to million-year-old glacier ice sun snowing fog and rain. I would certainly go back again. The Germans build these incredible engineering feats not just because they can; it's to get to the most incredible terrain on this planet.

The snow storm cycles moved back to Switzerland which is where we are now headed. The previous

POWDER SEEKERS



five issues detail our grand adventures. Except this one. Toll roads are the way to go— about \$20 and 140 kms/hr on a super highway right through mountains in massive tunnels and right over huge valleys on bridges that seem

bottomless... straight back to the mountain of free tickets. The mighty Mt Titlis. On the way there, we lost our friends. Daniel who we will meet again in the Republic of Georgia (but that is another story); Peter was the next to go back to city life. Too bad for those guys because the Powder Seekers did it again. We rolled into the now familiar parking lot and it started puking massive amounts of snow. I got frantic because I could not find a big chunk of hash we had been nibbling away at since Amsterdam. Anyway, we rolled up the last of weed for an

epic last day in the Swiss Alps. Us four slept in the Sprinter van and awoke bleary eyed and grumpy from rabid snoring, farting, and hungover as fuck, but all that washed away with free passes and 42 cm of fresh powder and the roads closed to the mountain. Conditions could not have been better. We ripped down steep chutes and ducked ropes in familiar areas and dropped down wicked steep tree runs that we scoped from the Rotair,

the revolving gondola. It drops you off in a glacier that has big crystals embedded in the ice.

One of the hardest things I have had to do was leave the Alps for the airport. One more little gem before we boarded the plane, I asked Ira if he could take my backpack as his carry on. He asked if I checked it all the pockets everywhere, I replied yes. The first pocket he checked, he found the big chunk of missing hash. The look he gave me I won't forget. I grabbed that chunk and swallowed it right there in front of the check-in. Thank God it

was a direct flight to Vancouver. Being trapped in flying tin can at 35000 ft with a head that was processing about 8 grams of Amsterdam's finest was strange to say the least, and customs was a breeze.

My final words: if you wanna go to the Alps, plan on no plan and go where the snow blows you my Powder Seeking friends!



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Kootenay Cultivar

Interview by Iree-I

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your best known for?

Kootenay Cultivar: Travis Heppner, CEO/owner and Tyeson Carmody Master Grower/Owner.

AU: What first drew you to the world of cannabis?

KC: Our hippie parents were advocates and we inherited the love of the flower.

AU: When did you first start growing Cannabis?

KC: Tyeson had his first grow in his parents' chicken coop at the age of 16. I had my first light in a little shed in 1995.

AU: What's it like being a licensed producer in BC?

KC: This has been one of the hardest things we have ever done, but at the same time, one of the most satisfying. It has been a real challenge to make this business work given the landscape,

but after two years of operations, we feel that we have established KC as a well-known producer of high-end craft cannabis and we will be around for the long term.

AU: What's the best part of your job?

KC: Dealing with the plant every day, as well as dealing with so many other like-minded people that are so passionate about cannabis.

AU: What strains do you currently produce and what makes them unique?

KC: Tiramisu, Animal face, OJ Zainbow, Meringue Kush, Fugu, among many others. All of our cuts are hunted by the team at our facility and they are all very unique. We do not use any nursery stock,

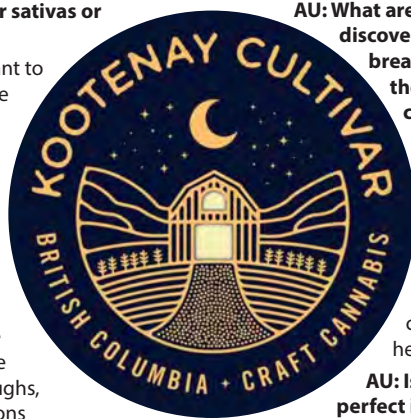
and only run phenos that come out of our R&D by popping seeds.

AU: What are some of your favourite strains to enjoy? Do you prefer sativas or indicas?

KC: Sativas when I want to get out and adventure and the indicas for good food and kicking back.

AU: Any Hempy Christmas plans this year?

KC: Christmas is all about taking time to hang with the people you love. There will be many great meals, laughs, and some great sessions happening for sure. Ha, I'm always at the grow on Christmas, the plants don't take



days off. (I'll get some family time in as well)

AU: What's the best way to enjoy cannabis over the holiday?

KC: With food.

AU: Do you think Jesus blazed the chronic?

KC: Probably often.

AU: What other biblical weed references are you aware of?

KC: The Burning Bush I've always thought was a marijuana reference for sure.

AU: What are some medicinal properties of cannabis that people might not know about?

KC: I think that the recreational properties are actually quite medicinal. People use it to relax and look at the world with a different perspective, which is very healing.

AU: What are the latest discoveries and breakthroughs in the medicinal cannabis world that you are aware of?

KC: I'm not sure of anything specific, however I believe that we have only scratched the surface of discovering what benefits the plant provides. The discovery of other flavour compounds like esters and thiols in herb are newish to me.

AU: Is the legal cannabis system perfect in Canada yet or do you have any suggestions for improvement?

KC: It is not a perfect system by any means,



and it is a lot different than most people thought. I think every company has had its ups and downs over the last number of years, but the ones that

are still here, are figuring it out. Changes will come, and there are great people lobbying for them but it will take time. We are hopeful to see some taxes and fees to come down over time, as well as the loosening of some of the regs.

AU: What makes an expert grower in your opinion?

KC: A person putting out beautiful, and unique flower on a regular basis, while doing it for the love of the plant.

AU: What are some growing secrets or tips you can share with our readers?

KC: Be observant. The plant is very expressive

while it grows, you just need to spend time with it to understand its body language.

AU: Why is it important to support local growers?

KC: Supporting local growers helps keep those smaller mom and pop operations going. Without the smaller craft companies like us, the market would be full of substandard corporate cannabis.

AU: Where are your products available?

KC: Evergreen Cannabis in Kits, of course. You can order for delivery anywhere in BC from ecsvan.ca.

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Cannabis Carols

All songs by Ted Smith

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Indoor and hashish and oil and cookies

But do you recall

The most famous outdoor of all?

Rudolf the red-haired outdoor

Was a very sticky strain

And if you ever smoked it

You would never be in pain

All of the other growers

Used to laugh and puff their own

They never tried some Rudolf

To find it has a really good stone

Then one dry and desperate eve

George Bush came to say "Rudolf with your hairs so bright,

Won't you fill my pipe tonight?"

Then all of the people loved it

As they smoked it all with glee

"Rudolf the red-haired outdoor,

You'll get grown through history!"

Good Queen Cannabis

Good Queen Cannabis looked out,

On the fields of B.C.,

Where the buds grew all about,

Far and dank and sticky,

Brightly shone the sun this fall,

And the frost was quite light

Many growers gave their all,

Making smiles bright

"Hither, friend, and smoke with me,

If you know the truth,

Why is ganja not set free?

Do you have the proof?"

"Queen, we live in troubled days,

Profits before prosper,

Those in power cling to ways,

That make us all suffer."

"Bring my hemp and bring my pot,

Bring my lawyers hither,

Thou and I shall sit down not,

While earth and people wither,

Friends of ganja, forth we go,

Let us puff together,

Fighting for our rights we know,

We will smoke forever."

Deck the Courts

Deck the courts with buds of ganja,

Jah la la la la la la la!

'Tis the sea-son to pray to Jah,

Jah la la la la la la la!

Don we now our hemp ap-pa-rel,

Jah la la la la la la la!

Sing this an-cient can-na-bis carol,

Jah la la la la la la la!

Smoke the blaz-ing spliff before us,

Jah la la la la la la la!

Spark a bowl and join the cho-rus,

Jah la la la la la la la!

Lis-ten now all le-gal think-ers,

Jah la la la la la la la!

While we sing of freedom seek-ers,

Jah la la la la la la la!

Fast a-way the old law pass-es,

Jah la la la la la la la!

Hail the new choice of the mass-es,

Jah la la la la la la la!

Smoke our gan-ja all to-gether,

Jah la la la la la la la!

Heed-less of the cops and wea-ther,

Jah la la la la la la la!



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Count Canna & Joint Connections

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your best known for?

Michelle Cozzuol:

Michelle Cozzuol, Count Canna, where we bridge the gaps from the farm to the shelf and all the way to the consumer. I guess best known for: showcasing and collaboration, connections. I have taken this job to heart. My goal is to solve common pain points and find solutions for the connecting sectors of the industry. I have spent two years working all over different farms, processing facilities, retail locations. The best way to truly understand is to walk a day in the shoes... so every opportunity I can I take - allowing me truly understand how we can create a sustainable foundation for cannabis specifically in BC and across the country.



Our proprietary software, R.A.D.I.O. (Resource Access Dashboard for Inventory and Operations), revolutionized retailers' practices, ushering them into the modern era. However, our biggest focus remained on Joint Connections. Recognizing the disconnect in the industry, we immersed ourselves, tackling inventory issues from the farm to the shelf and all the way to the consumer. There was absolutely a better way!

Through hands-on experience, from learning the process from seed to trim down on the farm, to

processing pre-rolls, managing a retail location, acting as budtenders and participating in culture and community events, we developed Joint Connections. Built to meet the needs of retailers while fulfilling the desires of producers and brands. In a landscape constrained by strict advertising laws, the need for a collective space for seamless connections became apparent.

Thus, jointconnections.ca powered by Count Canna's R.A.D.I.O., was born, reshaping how reps and retailers connect.

Though our recent trip to CBC's Dragons' Den didn't secure a deal, we embrace the challenge of proving the skeptics wrong and accepting their invitation to come back. We are determined to celebrate the first deal of its kind in the Den's history. As I stated for the world to hear, "I'm just not done!" This journey has been a passion, a goal, and a challenge for my son, Jesse Cozzuol, and myself over the last 3.5 years, but we believe in the power of collaboration

and cannabis and remain committed to making a difference, removing stigma, and propelling the industry towards certainty and sustainability. And we won't stop until we get there. You can count on it!

AU: What's the best part of your job?

MC: Absolutely the people, hands down. The love, passion, and heart so many in this industry have to trailblaze and make way for an amazing future for cannabis. It's really quite amazing when you think of it. We are taking part in writing history—we are laying the landscape for those that come later. It's already been a long haul and we still have such a ways to go, but we will make it better.

AU: Who are some of the companies you work with that deserve more attention that you would like to mention?

MC: Wow that is really tough! I'm lucky enough to work with a lot of micros, so I get to really know them, their stories—I get connected. These are pretty amazing people but definitely some that have believed in me, supported me and could see and understand that I was looking at

a bigger picture. I have a list too long to mention all those that have helped me shape and get where I am. I truly admire and respect their dedication, drive, and hustle and their amazing hearts. It's truly been a collective of brands, advocacy associations, and retailer connections.

AU: What are some of your favourite strains to enjoy? Do you prefer sativas or indicas?

MC: Definitely a sativa day girl. I love F.A.A.F.O. right now— you open that bag and it's just beautiful, I can instantly tell. Citrus light, so clean, white ash, creative high for me! Now when the evening sets in, it's a little different for me. Royal Harvest Frosted Fruit Cake is simply amazing. Also, Boxcar, Rocky Mtn and Papa Joe's are night time go-tos. However, my new thing is dabs. Last year at the age of 50, I enjoyed my first dab— Strawberry Jam by Dabble; still my top pick no matter what concentrate I try. Lastly, I would say another new favourite: adding CBD from Seventails to any daytime roll or trying a new product from NaturalRem. There are just so many choices when it comes to cannabis favourites; it's not only about the smoking anymore.

AU: Any Hempy Christmas plans this year?

MC: We are currently on tour with our Joint Connections Holiday Hotbox, which will run until mid-December. Of course, there is also a store to manage at the busiest time of year— shoutout to Queens Cannabis (the owner and I go back 20 years from hospitality and bar industry) and without a doubt, family time. I am a mom of four, a wife of 30 years (married my high school sweetheart), and now a grandma, and that is the BEST.

AU: What's the best way to enjoy cannabis over the holidays?

MC: The best way to enjoy is to discover something new about cannabis and then actually try something new, learn something new, experience it... With so much variety, we have so much to benefit and enjoy from this amazing plant. go low and slow to start, but I would encourage people to try a new product or category.

AU: What are some medicinal properties of cannabis that people might not know about?

MC: Although my experience is recreational cannabis, there is a long list that I still have so much to learn about but the key cannabinoids for people to start educating themselves with would be CBG, CBD, and for sleep ailments, CBN.

AU: Is the legal cannabis system perfect in Canada yet or do you have any suggestions for improvement?

MC: This needs a whole other interview. The cannabis industry is run and operated unlike any other industry in our country, whether it be highly-regulated or not. Where or what other industry is the supplier taxed so high, in fact taxed on taxes to the point they are losing money before they make money. An industry that is legal but is treated still like an illicit space— like we are criminals. Banking options are limited



or don't exist at all for some. Regulations that are so restricted that you cannot in any way advertise your product, although it is legal and safe. Ridiculous procedures that include redundant and time-consuming paperwork that in some cases has to be stored for up to 25 years. Restricted payment options between farmers and retailers. Government distribution imbalance. Province to province alignment of policies and regulations— it goes on and on. There are solutions, but truly we need to come together to make change.

AU: What makes an expert grower in your opinion?

MC: NOT ME, haha! An expert grower to me would be someone who fully understands the growth stages, genetics, and physiological needs (light, water, nutrients, temperature, humidity). I find I learn something new every single time I'm down on a farm or in a facility.

AU: Why is it important to support local growers?

MC: BC cannabis is not just kick-ass, it's the best. It is world renowned. It is our BC local growers who are growing the best in the world and if we do not support them, they simply

will not survive. Unfortunately, the government has almost designed the system so that it will literally knock them down one by one, or out of the country. It is necessary to support local, especially in cannabis.

AU: How can people find you online?

MC: Count Canna is the parent company— developer of R.A.D.I.O. software— farm, retailer, and consumer solutions dashboards: individually developed to solve pain points.

Joint Connections is the platform that connects everything cannabis: products, tourism, education, direct delivery, resources, accommodations, artisans, services, and more. We are only getting started. Over 150 retailers with access and 50 brands and service— we are only getting bigger. Brand retailers get connected; consumers take a look!

"One Place - One Space - All Things Cannabis"

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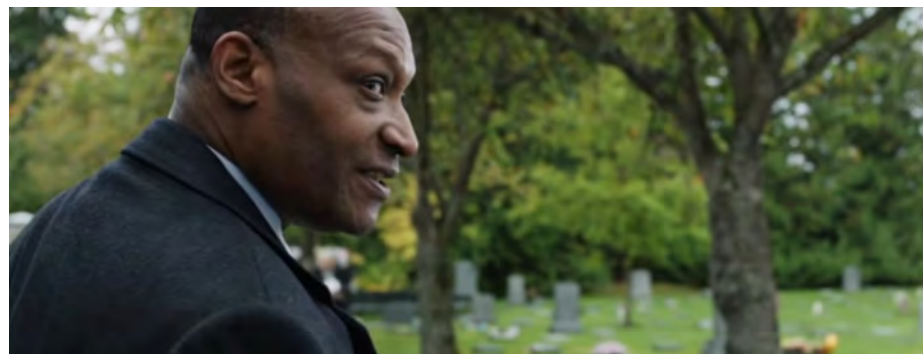
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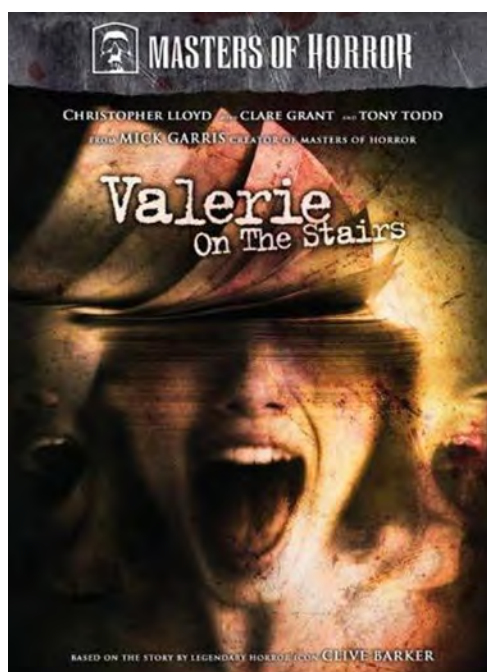


Tony Todd and some Forgotten Vancouver Horror...

By Vince D'Amato

Okay, so being from Vancouver, I have to admit that I do love the opportunity to talk about any city-related horror. Unfortunately, this time it comes on the coattails of the untimely passing of Tony Todd. Not only a horror icon, he was so far beyond and above being a mere horror personality, bringing sincere depth and a joyful eccentricity to his performances, which never overshadowed what he needed to do as an actor to service his characters and their stories. Which now leads me to something that I hadn't been thinking much about until now – the somewhat forgotten presence of early-

2000s horror productions in Vancouver. Yes, gone are the days of the *Final Destination* productions, *The X-Files*, *Masters of Horror*, *Freddy vs. Jason*, and the like, but what might be a little bit crazy is just how forgotten some of those things have become (the *Final Destination* franchise notwithstanding,



as that one just seems to keep on giving)... Where online can we find the *Masters of Horror* series streaming, or for that matter, the Vancouver-produced Jolene Blalock/Tony Todd/James Marsters horror-thriller *Shadow Puppets*? Keeping focus on the late Tony Todd, it's notable that he reprised his work with author Clive Barker in the Mick Garriss-produced Vancouver series *Masters of Horror*, in the creepy and darkly erotic writer-centric episode "Valerie on the Stairs" (2005/2006). I personally moved away from Vancouver

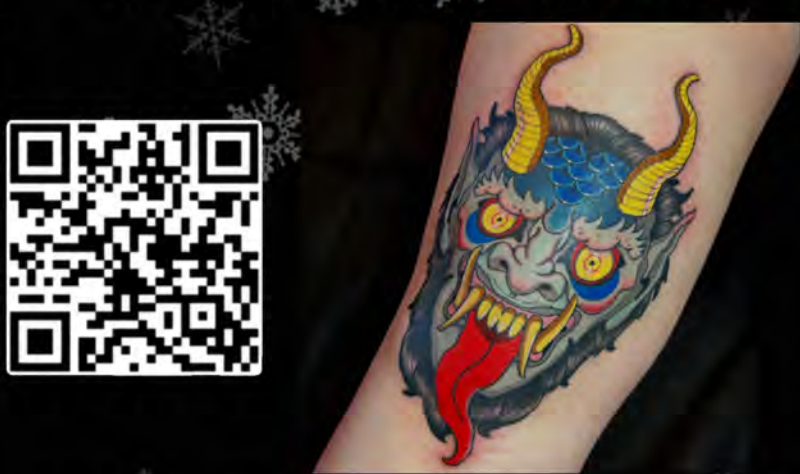
TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE

in 2011 for about a year, living in London, UK, and during the 2011 Frightfest in Piccadilly Circus I stumbled accidentally into *Final Destination 5* (it was the only film screening at the time I showed up) and the first thing I saw was the Lions Gate Bridge disintegrating from underneath the new group of young actors populating the then-new chapter in the franchise. It made me more than a little homesick, and there was Tony Todd, providing that much-needed connective through-line to the series once again. I'm proud

now to be part of a company that has contributed to the media preservation of Tony Todd's *Shadow Puppets*, and on a deeper personal level, I also make sure I keep my collection of *Masters of Horror* DVDs handy so that I can watch my favourite episodes at any given whim – and yes, specifically "Valerie on the Stairs" (directed by Mick Garriss), one of my absolute favourites.

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Yuletide... Action?

An Incomplete List of Unconventional Seasonal Cinema By Brian FH Clement

Two years ago, I sent in a list of Yuletide Horrors for Absolute Underground, so this year it's time for a follow-up with some action, some horror, and some truly unexpected "Christmas" movies, usually only using the season as set dressing. Unconventional Christmas themed movies are popular in recent years (*Violent Night*, *Red One*, etc) so here's a few more. (What won't be listed are things like *Scrooged*, since despite being a bit unconventional, is 100% fully Christmas-themed as it's a retelling of *A Christmas Carol*.) You've probably seen some (maybe most) of these and forgotten that the holiday season had anything to do with them! Maybe it's time to dig them up and re-watch, eh?

Die Hard (1988)

This is too easy, so there's no need to rehash the endless online "debate" about whether it counts as a Christmas movie. A sterling example of '80s action cinema, it was actually released during the summer (and I could go on for several pages about how its real subtext is post-Vietnam war USA's desire for reasserting its macho dominance over resurgent Japan, Europe, and women in the workforce).

Lethal Weapon (1987)

Oh yes, not just the cocaine and "I'm too old for this," but nearly every scene has Christmas decorations in the background. One of the pivotal scenes features Mel Gibson and Danny Glover's Riggs and Murtaugh discussing their plan of attack next to a Christmas tree, and the movie even opens with "Jingle Bell Rock". Written by Shane Black, who frequently sets action movies during the holidays (*The Long Kiss Goodnight*, *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, *Iron Man 3*). Like *Die Hard*, has an undercurrent of post-Vietnam war US attitudes.

First Blood (1982)

Wait, what? John Rambo goes in search of his lone surviving Vietnam war buddy (are we sensing a theme here?) and instead finds only loneliness, depression, and a small-town sheriff with too much time to harass people who are minding their own business. Yes, if you look closely, there are Christmas decorations up in the police station and around the town (Hope, BC standing in for a fictional hamlet in Washington state). Not really seasonally themed, and a suspicious lack of snow for the interior of the Pacific Northwest during December, but it surely fits in with the holiday spirit of "not treating people like shit lest they raze your town with gunfire." Originally ended with Rambo committing suicide by having Col. Troutman shoot him, which would have made for a more impactful story. The book it's based on is darker and even more disturbing, if that's somehow possible.

Cobra (1986)

Ok, take Stallone but toss out all the sentimentality, inner emotional turmoil, self-reflection, and character-driven story behind a guy we want to root for in his struggle with the demons of his past, and just have a brutally violent cop who nonsensically cuts pizza with scissors (because he's such a badass) and ruthlessly guns down the slimiest, greasiest serial killing cultists in what is one of the ugliest Christmas-set, '80s crime-paranoia movies ever. Notable for having a hero driving a car with the license plate "AWSOM 50" who is nearly as sadistic as the psychopathic villains he hunts down. Christmas decorations abound, though it's even less relevant to the movie than the others in this list (maybe aside from one of Cobretti's many callous one-liners like "Go ahead. I don't shop here" in response to a maniac threatening to blow up a supermarket).

Rex: A Dinosaur's Story (1993)

Okay, bear with me here. A Japanese movie about a dinosaur egg found in a magic cave, from which hatches a cute, tail-wagging baby Tyrannosaurus, set during Christmas. Possibly one of the schmalziest movies ever made, this features an excruciatingly long scene in which the cute kid who befriends the baby dinosaur teaches it how to take a dump. Rex almost immediately after being born becomes a commercial star, and is forced to go on the run when very unscrupulous characters want to steal him, and winds up hiding out in a Christmas village, after stealing the costume off a Col. Sanders statue from a KFC (for reasons too long to explain, KFC is associated with Christmas in Japan). Yes, this is a real movie!

The Oracle (1985)

Trashy low-budget horror with wild gore, spotty editing, and acting that ranges from acceptable to terrible. A young woman moves into a NY apartment and she's enlisted by the ghost of a murder victim to get revenge. This is what might happen if you made cheap eggnog out of the original *Evil Dead*, *The Sentinel*, and *Poltergeist* on a tiny budget, but not really up to their energy levels. I don't think the Christmas setting was even relevant to the movie in any way, although they did clearly shoot in winter at least.

Eyes Wide Shut (1999)

Kubrick's final film, a disturbing and dreamlike journey into a hidden world of sexual impropriety. Various turkeys have mistakenly thought this movie's story about a guy discovering a secret orgy cult should be taken literally, when it's clearly meant to symbolize the deep-seated sexual insecurities so many men suffer from: that around every corner everyone but you is having sex, that you'll be tempted by teenage girls, gay men will check you out, you'll be mistakenly gay-bashed by frat boys, and in order to prove your manliness you may almost get in bed with a prostitute who you discover has AIDS. And of course, that your wife could have had an affair with someone hotter than you at the drop of a hat, and secretly wants to have sex with hundreds of other men. Does this have anything to do with Christmas? Other than providing a contrasting backdrop to the storyline, the decor certainly makes the lighting look good.

The Silent Partner (1978)

Tense heist thriller shot in Toronto and featuring Christopher Plummer in a fun, scenery-chewing performance as a psychopathic thief who robs a bank at Christmas, Elliot Gould as the guy trying not to get killed after scamming said thief, and a young John Candy in a small role. Fun to see Toronto of the 1970s on display, plus this is a great little picture (one I was lucky enough to catch in a theatrical screening a few years ago). My personal favourite of the movies to feature a gun-toting Santa Claus.

Jacob's Ladder (1990)

Like *First Blood*, it's easy to miss that this is set around Christmas, as Tim Robbins' Jacob Singer character goes through a surreal and nightmarish



series of hallucinatory scenarios centered around his experience in the Vietnam war. He's haunted by demons, loved ones who have died, and yes, is robbed by a guy in a Santa suit who is soliciting for donations on the street. Christmas really doesn't factor into this movie at all other than the Santa robbery, but if you've never seen this you should.

BONUS: A Muppet Family Christmas (1987)

No, NOT *The Muppet Christmas Carol*, instead what is truly the best Muppets-involved X-Mas media in existence. I'm clearly sneaking this onto the list since it is a legitimate Christmas program, not just using it as a backdrop. Fozzie bear and the other Muppets travel to visit Ma Bear for Christmas, the *Sesame Street* characters show up, and they even hang out with the *Fraggles*. Currently not streaming or available in a complete form on physical media due to conflicting licensing issues (since Disney absorbed the Muppets characters but not *Sesame Street*, plus some of the music can't be cleared), this can and should be tracked down in its uncut form with complete songs... through various internet means.

Honorable mentions: *Batman Returns* (1992), *The Apartment* (1960), *12 Monkeys* (1995), everything on my Yuletide Horrors list from two years ago: *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night* (1984) and *Part 2* (1987), *Gremlins* (1984), *Black Christmas* (1974), *Don't Open 'til Christmas* (1984), *Christmas Evil* (1980), *Santa's Slay* (2005), *The Lodge* (2019)

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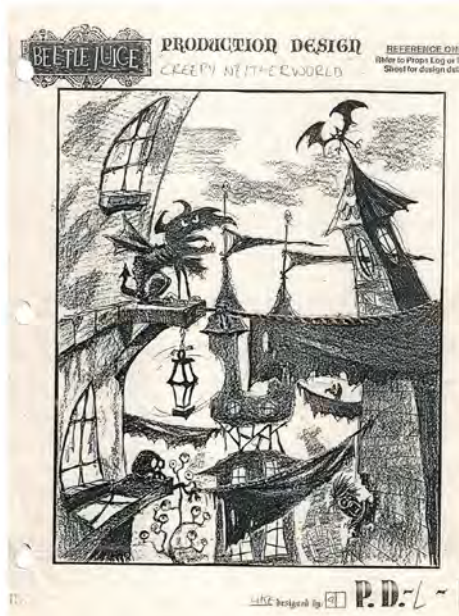
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Chris Labonte

Animator of the Dark Arts

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most known for?

Chris LaBonte: My name is Chris LaBonte and I am a Canadian artist who has worked in the animation industry here and abroad since 1985. I guess I am primarily known for being the production designer on the *Beetlejuice* animated series in the '90s; I designed most of the main characters, props and locations over most of its run. Of course, I have worked on many series during my work history, some well-known and some quite obscure. I am also a musician and have been involved in the hardcore and metal scene for about as long as I have worked in animation.

AU: What got you into animation?

CB: I got into animation because I grew up with classic cartoons like *Looney Tunes*, *Tex Avery* etc. When I was a kid, I didn't know how the cartoons were made and I even didn't know when I actually applied to Sheridan College. I did applications for graphics, illustration, AND animation, as I didn't fully understand the differences. Of course, my application portfolio was full of cartoons and Sheridan figured I'd be best served going into the classical animation program. I did pretty well, except for some occasional reprimands for my behaviour. I ended up getting hired at Nelvana during my third year in college. I was briefly in the sound department, but soon I tested for the design and layout department and ended up getting hired for the *Star Wars: Ewoks* and *Droids* series. That was pretty dope, as I was always a bit of a *Star Wars* nerd, despite also being a hardcore punk nerd.

AU: How would you describe the art you create?

CB: It depends what job I am doing. At this point in my career, I am spending more time concentrating on my personal work. I have always wanted to spend more time in the horror realm of art and have been developing my 'social presence' online for a few years now. My personal work has been described as 'dark art with a pop twist' as I tend to use more colour than a lot of dark artists. I figure that comes from my many years as an animation designer and art director, so those cartoon colours creep into even my darkest work. My obsession with the skeletal form is also prominently featured; almost every piece I do features a skeleton or many skeletons.

AU: What are some of the shows/productions you've worked on, and can you describe what your roles were? What are some of your favourite projects you've been involved with?

CB: My history in the industry has been long of

course, so there is a wide variety of work under my belt. Following that, I worked on a bunch of cutesy stuff, including the *Care Bears* series that Nelvana was known for. That was excruciating, but it paid the bills. Imagine drawing *Care Bears* all day and then playing in hardcore bands at night. Talk about a split personality. I was picked out of my *Care Bear* hell (director Robin Budd had seen my personal work and thought I would be a good fit) and was hired to become Nelvana's first series production designer on *Beetlejuice*. That saved my sanity and my career, I think. I was seriously considering going into photocopy repair since I hated drawing *Care Bears* so much. I then worked in the US for a couple years, as my reputation had caught some studio attention. I worked in San Francisco and have also done various stints in LA. At this point, I was mostly a lead designer/art director. It was natural with my accumulated experience that I should pursue being a director, so I ended up directing the first 2D digital Flash series, called *John Callahan's QUADS* which is hard to describe unless you are aware of John Callahan's work (RIP John). It was an adult-oriented raunch fest about a paraplegic loser and a houseful of other handicapped maniacs. I encourage readers to look it up online if they have never seen it. I really enjoyed the project, despite the enormous pressure to deliver the first show of its kind. Of course, ALL 2D shows are now produced digitally with updated tech. At the time, we were using the same Flash software that everyone at home was using. As my experience increased, I moved into more directing positions and also storyboarding gigs. At the moment, my day job is primarily storyboarding. I like the lifestyle it offers as I work at home, mostly on my own. It allows me to tailor my schedule so I can get more of my personal work done. One of the most notable shows I have storyboarded on recently is *Sausage Party: Foodtopia* which you

can see on Amazon I believe. That was a lot of fun. I prefer adult-oriented series of course, but you can't always be picky.

AU: What medium do you work in? Is there something new you've always wanted to try?

CB: At the moment, for my personal work, I am primarily using an iPad pro (with iPencil). I love the portability, versatility and comfort of being able to sit anywhere and start a painting whenever an idea hits me. I have worked in traditional media a bit too, but got sucked into digital stuff in the industry as I really liked the idea of painting with light. I think I may get back into oils and acrylics when I leave the animation industry, though. I've always wanted to be involved in a giant projected project of my work with music that I have written and performed. I am presently in an instrumental post-metal band, so that seems like a good fit. I just need to stop scrambling for a paycheck before I can delve into that. I don't think anyone will pay me to do that initially.

AU: Do you do commissions at all? What's the weirdest thing someone has ever requested?

CB: I love doing commissions if I get to do them in my style. I have spent so many years working to the specs of whatever project I am on, that it is a breath of fresh air to be let loose to provide my art for someone's project. Most of the stuff I am commissioned to do by its very nature is weird so I guess it's weird if someone wants something 'mainstream.' I did have a guy ask me to work with him on a children's book once, but it ended when I got the impression that he thought any artist would be interested in any style.

AU: What do you listen to while you're working?

CB: It really depends on what work I am doing and what kind of mood I am in. For example, if I am rough storyboarding, I can't listen to anything with lyrics, because I am reading and re-reading the script I have been given for the show. I would listen to nothing or I would listen to instrumental music. Lately, I have been enjoying instrumental

atmospheric black metal and post metal lately. I've also been going back in time a lot and re-listening to the ISIS discography... no, not the terrorist group, the supergroup featuring Melvins members, etc. If I am doing the cleanup phase of storyboards, there is a lot of grunt work to do and I don't need to read the script as much. I can then listen to podcasts and audio books. Predictably, I prefer horror and thriller audiobooks. As far as podcasts, I have a pretty big library that's all over the board. A lot of political stuff and lot of humour and internet commentary. I've really cooled it on the true crime stuff though. I just got saturated with that. Some days I just listen to random music, or I check in with my 22-year-old son, who is dialled in on recent alternative music to see what he likes. He is also deeply into the hardcore and punk from my era. He's basically inherited my vinyl collection.

AU: Do you have any other hobbies?

CB: Music, definitely music. I am presently in a post-metal instrumental band called TRIAGE. I am one of the guitarists and the primary composer/engineer. I work mostly remotely with two talented pals. Matty is the other guitarist and the bass player is another dude named Chris who I have been in several bands with since the '80s. The drums at this point are sampled, but with today's software and tech, they sound live as fuck. We release sporadic singles, complete with videos on an unpredictable schedule. Most of the vids will feature my artwork. Chris and I are the vid editors and take turns producing the vids or sometimes we team up. I was also, until recently, in a punk cover band that did mostly Tom Jones songs called The Hard Toms. We disbanded recently for various reasons, but once we lost our trumpet player then COVID happened, things kind of petered out. It was fun while it lasted and we were very well-received by audiences and it was always a fun evening. There's still lots of stuff on YouTube if you want to check that out though. My other hobbies are outdoor activities like kayaking, fishing, hiking. Any excuse to be in the bush or on a trail.

AU: What bands have you been involved with over the years and what did you play in them?

CB: Son of Happy: Toronto based hardcore band/singer/rhythm guitar ('80s and '90s)

Hi Dummy: Toronto power trio, melodic/jazzy hardcore ('90s)

Pullfinger: Vancouver based metal tinged hardcore band ('90s)

The Hard Toms: Toronto based punk cover band, playing Tom Jones, Burt Bacharach and Englebert Humperdinck songs. 2015-2024.

TRIAGE: Mostly Toronto-based, Post-metal instrumental with groove metal, doom, black metal and hardcore blended in.



AU: Any upcoming projects or exhibits to promote?

CB: No, no gallery stuff at present, but would like to. You can see my stuff and get updates on my website and on Instagram. You can also visit and purchase prints and merch at my Etsy store. I am slowly moving all my merch to my website and hope to leave Etsy if I can get a good mailing list going. I am also working on a new band with my son called Pit Belly so keep your eyes peeled for that.

AU: What are some of your favourite X-Mas movies of all time?

CB: *Black Christmas*, *A Christmas Story*, *Die Hard*, *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer* (the animated one), *Elf*. We usually watch *The Thing* around Christmas time too.

AU: Santa Claus or Krampus? Why?

CB: Krampus of course! Horror AND Christmas at the same time. Win/win. I also love to see the various versions of Krampus that artists are constantly generating. I've done a few myself.

AU: Can you give us a quick best of 2024 list for the following items: book you read, movie you saw, album you heard, band you saw live? Best local band deserving of more recognition? The thing that blew your mind the most?

CB: Movie: *The Substance* is prob my fave from this year. Bonkers. I also enjoyed *Oddity*, which has one of the best jump-scares I've ever seen. Great atmosphere in that one too.

Best live band: SUMAC

Best local band deserving of more recognition: 2theBone (hardcore)

Fave album: If These Trees Could Talk - *The Bones of a Dying World* (2016) I discovered these guys late.

Fave Book: *All the Fiends of Hell* by Adam Nevill. He also does great short story compilations. Look for *Hasty for the Dark: Selected Horrors*.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

CB: I hope I have created some naughty things that people will find nice.

AU: Any parting advice for aspiring artists or animators?

CB: Even if you land an industry gig, always be working on your own stuff. You can't always choose the \$ project you're working on, but you can keep your sanity by creating your own stuff. It may even get you noticed above others if the right eyes are looking at it.

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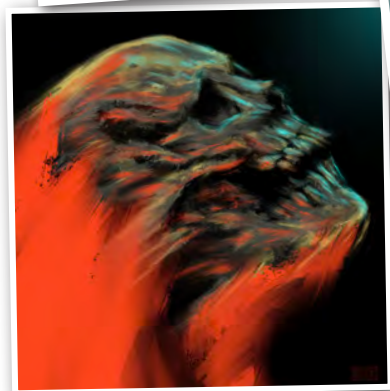
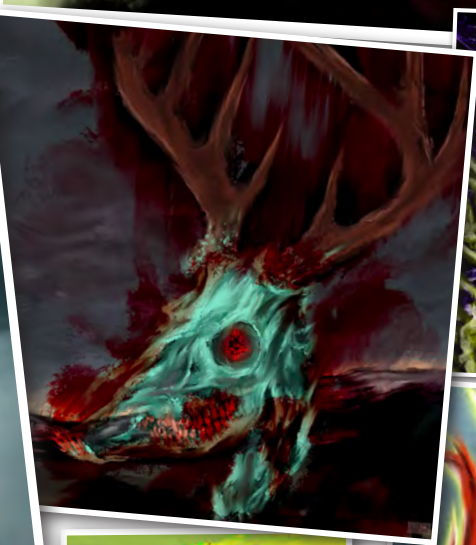
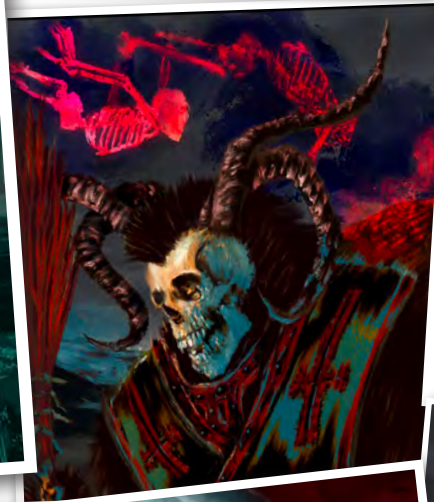
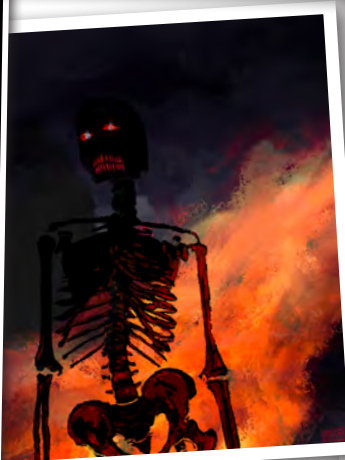
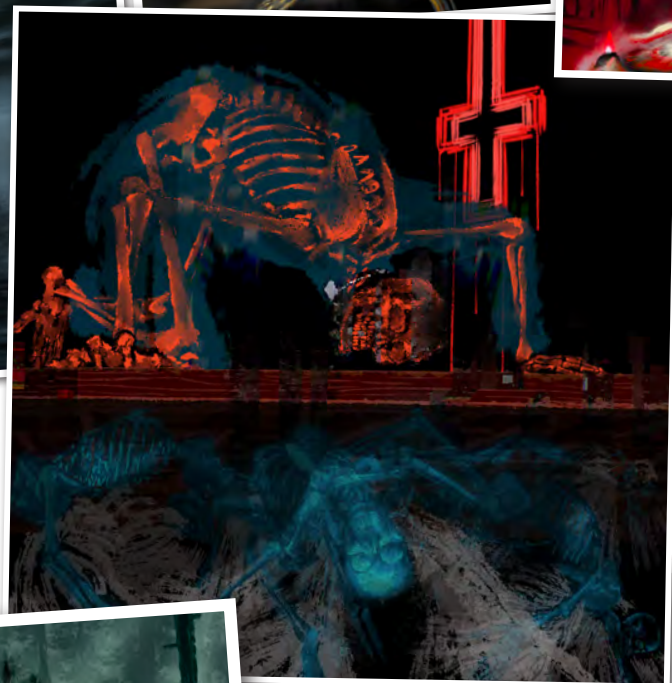
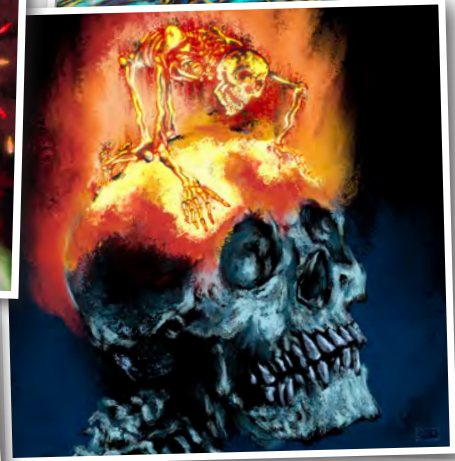
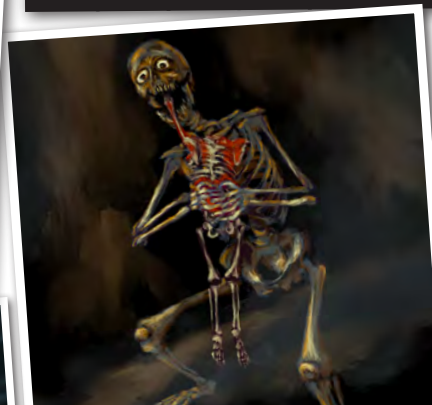
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CHRIS LABONTE



Île Sauvage Brewing

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Ian Ibbotson: I'm Ian Ibbotson, Owner and Co-Founder of Île Sauvage Brewing Co. in Victoria, along with my partner, Stéphane Turcotte. I wear many hats around the brewery: general management, sales, deliveries, maintenance, and occasionally helping Stéphane with production when needed. If you see our product at an event, chances are I'm the one serving and chatting about it.

AU: How long have you been involved in the world of beer?

Ian: Île Sauvage has been around since November 2018, but I was a homebrewer before that. Stéphane and I dreamed this up back in December 2016, so that's when the journey really began for me.

AU: How did your brewery get its start?

Ian: Stéphane was running a brewery in South Korea, and I was homebrewing here in Canada. We were old roommates from a decade prior and kept in touch, mostly chatting about the beers we were brewing. These were mostly sour and mixed-culture styles, aged long-term to develop complex fermentation flavours. In December 2016, Stéphane was back in Canada for his Advanced Cicerone exam, and over a couple of pints, I said, "If you ever think about moving back to Canada and opening a brewery that specializes in mixed-culture sours and saisons, I'd be into it." He replied, "I was just about to ask if you wanted to open a sour and funky brewery." We reached out to Adam, our original co-founder, and the rest is history.

AU: What are some types of beer you brew?

Ian: We offer a broad range of styles at Île Sauvage, but we're best known for our fruited sours and saisons. That said, we like to surprise people—our 21 taps often include everything from light lagers, IPAs, pale ales, and stouts to barrel-aged sours and saisons.

AU: What sets your beer apart?

Ian: It all starts with the yeast. We carefully match the yeast to the beer we want to create. Across our 21 taps, you might find 10-15 different yeast strains in primary fermentation, plus countless others in secondary fermentation. We use diverse fermentation vessels to create unique flavours.

We don't have a single "house yeast"—the closest thing would be the mixed culture in our foudres. What's in there? Your guess is almost as good as mine.

AU: Any unique brewing secrets you can share?

Ian: Not much is a secret—it's all out there on the internet. But if there's one thing we've learned, it's that healthy yeast is everything. Most beers we've had to dump were because of fermentation off-flavours from unhealthy yeast. If it doesn't taste good after primary fermentation, it's unlikely to

improve, no matter how much effort you put into fixing it. Oh, also trust your cleaning and sanitation; don't let risk of infection stifle your creativity.

AU: Where are you located? Can people stop by to sample your beer?



Ian: We'd love for you to visit! We're at 2960 Bridge St. in Rock Bay, Victoria. We have a cozy mezzanine, a full bar with great staff, and pizzas from Pizzeria Prima Strada, along with other snacks and of course a huge selection of great beer brewed on site.

AU: Where can Île Sauvage currently be found on tap or in the cooler?

Ian: The best place to find our newest releases is at the brewery. Our beers are also available at private liquor stores on Vancouver Island (up to Campbell River) and in the Lower Mainland. On tap, you can usually find us at spots like The Drake, The Courtney Room, Interactive Board Game Café, Refuge, Sawmill Taphouse, Craft Fare, and Sessions Taphouse, Pizzeria Prima Strada, to name a few.

AU: Any plans to showcase your beer over the holidays?

Ian: We'll be at the Moss Street Christmas Market, but otherwise, it's all hands on deck at the brewery. The holidays are packed with private events, and we want to ensure everyone has a great experience when they visit.

AU: Do you prefer Santa Claus or Krampus?

Ian: Krampus looks rad, but I've got to go with Santa Claus. I'd rather be rewarded for good

BREWING 101

behaviour than punished for bad.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice this year?

Ian: Hopefully nice! That's pretty high on my personal philosophy: "Be nice to people as long as they return the favour. If they don't, then fuck 'em."

AU: What do you like best about brewing beer?

Ian: I love the creativity. We use a lot of local ingredients—grain, fruit, even vegetables. Sometimes a farmer shows up with something unique, and we work hard to fit it into a beer, matching the yeast, grain, and pH to create something delicious. Brewing also comes with a fantastic community. Other breweries have been incredibly welcoming, and there's so much collaboration and mutual support. Our customers, too, are curious and appreciative, which makes it all the more rewarding.

AU: This will be our 20th Anniversary issue. When did you first hear about AU and what makes it special to you?

Ian: I've been in Victoria for 20 years now. Growing up as a punk/skate/snowboard kid in the Kootenays, I didn't know many local bands when I first arrived. AU helped me figure out what shows were happening and introduced me to the local music scene.

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?

Ian: We're always releasing new beers. One of our staff members recently designed her first commercial beer—Rivière Rouge, an ESB with cedar, which turned out fantastic. We also just brewed Noël, our holiday favourite, a gose with cherries and tonka beans. Keep an eye out for those and drop by the brewery to say hi.

AU: Famous last words?

Ian: Oh geez. We do things a little differently, but that's what keeps it interesting.

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Jordie Taylor

By Mike "Is That a Foreign Object?" Croy

Season's Greetings and Merry Christmas! Welcome to a holiday edition of Turnbuckle Sandwich. I recently had the pleasure of chatting with a heavy hitting bearded man that's definitely not Santa Clause, but instead a serious juggernaut of the independent wrestling scene in the Pacific Northwest, Jordie Taylor. Jordie is a multiple-time decorated champion across a plethora of wrestling promotions, he founded and leads the faction "The Moment of Truth" and is a locker room leader. He had some great stories and advice for readers and what follows is our 5-star rated match discussion:

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Jordie Taylor: Jordie Taylor "The Impaler"

AU: How did you get into wrestling?

JT: I've been obsessed with wrestling since the age of five. It's all I've ever been able to think about.

AU: Who trained you to wrestle?

JT: I was trained by Lance Storm at the Storm Wrestling Academy in Calgary Alberta.

AU: What can you tell our readers about "The Moment of Truth"?

JT: The Moment of Truth is my baby. It started out at three members, and is currently the largest faction on earth at 34 or 35, maybe even 36 at this point. I started it as a way to help as many greenhorns as possible. To attach my name recognition to help as many as wanted and needed it. Somewhere along the line it snowballed and now has the likes of Jason the Terrible in it.

AU: What in your opinion makes for a captivating storyline in wrestling?

JT: A good storyline, like a good match. Requires heat. A heel makes a babyface. If you don't have heat, the fans won't care truly. If I had to give another avenue for making a good angle, it would be realism. What's real always resonates.

AU: Growing up, who was your favourite wrestler?

JT: My first favourite wrestler was the Ultimate Warrior. As I grew up though, my favourite has always been Billy Gunn, but favourite is different than most inspirational. Stone Cold is who I've taken most from. Roddy Piper is who influenced my promos. Scott Hall is where I took my punch and a bunch of mannerisms, but Billy Gunn has always been my guy.



AU: How long have you been wrestling?

JT: I'm a little over a month and a half away from my 14th wrestling anniversary. Outside of that (and it's not something people are supposed to say) but I backyard wrestled since age 14.

AU: What advice would you give new talent learning to wrestle?

JT: To new talents, listen to your vets. Slow down. Learn to tell a story. Get to understand psychology. Work hard and don't be lazy, as you get what you put in. Work on your punch. Work on promos. Focus on the fundamentals and make them second nature. Learn to tell a story. Don't worry about the peer pressure of moves and spots like most do today. If you want to stand out, get to know who you are and how that translates in the ring.

AU: What's the funniest thing you've seen happen at a live show?

JT: The funniest thing. I have a couple. I've seen someone crap their pants at the start of a match, and then hit their opponents in the face with their ass. I've personally had my jeans rip down the centre of my ass mid-match, to where I had to wrestle another 15 minutes with myself completely exposed. Luckily, I was wearing a thong so not all of myself was out.

AU: Who inspires you the most?

JT: Who inspires me most, Stone Cold and Roddy Piper. They were real as a heart attack. Their passion would shine through with everything they did. They are the reason I am the way I am. In the ring and out. In terms of who inspires me outside of the big names. As cheesy or cliché as it may sound, my partner, the Priestess Lee (That's her wrestling name) she works her ass off in everything she's given. She wasn't a wrestling fan growing up but has

grinded so very hard to make herself a credible female in the scene around here. I've watched her push herself during times she hasn't wanted to. To my knowledge she's the first woman to jump off a steel cage in BC, possibly even Canada. I'm not entirely sure on Canada but I've done my research in this area. She inspires me daily. And my best

TURNBUCKLE SANDWICH

friend Daniel Adonis. The man is a machine. His entire career is a testament to his undying will to be better. They make me a better man just by being themselves.

AU: If you could invite anyone for dinner, who would you invite and why?

JT: Well, I'm a very closed off person. I don't like to let people into my house or my bubble without vetting. I don't have celebrity worship. So, I wouldn't invite a single person who hasn't landed a spot in my heart. With that said, I'd invite Daniel Adonis, Nick Price, Todd Quality, BJ Laredo, Cremator Von Slasher, Danni Deeds, Eddie Osbourne and Haviko. Because I love them as people.

AU: What's the craziest match you've been involved in so far?

JT: A four-person ladder match for the VIPW Championship. It was a night that the fans said was real. Because it was. I had my chest caved in not five minutes into the contest. But of course, went 15 more minutes like an idiot because I won't stop if it means the fans don't get their money's worth.

AU: How has wrestling impacted your life?

JT: Wrestling is and always has been my entire life. There is no Jordie as the world knows me without it. So, it's impacted every decision since age five.

AU: Who are your favourite people to work with?

JT: My favourite people to work with are the people I'd have for dinner. On top of that, I love working with and helping greenhorns. They are the next generation.

AU: As we wrap things up here Jordie, is there anything else you would like our readers to know?

JT: To quote Baron Von Raschke "Dat is all da people need to know!"

FB: @Taylortheimpaler



Burnt Knives

Interview by Andy MacDonald

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Jesse: Hey! I'm Jesse and I'm the lead vocalist. Robbie plays the guitar. Alex is on the bass. Julian is on thunder drums.

AU: Give us a brief history of your band

Jesse: Burnt Knives came out of the ashes of a couple bands about 10 years ago, Robbie and I had a short lived project called Giving Up initially, which self-prophetically ended rather quickly. From there we brought Julian on (from Mad Trapper and Uplift infamy) and rounded it out with Alex who is on semi-permanent loan from the very awesome Horse Lung.

AU: Does your band have a specific message?

Jesse: These are songs about how much the world sucks, but we don't have an answer, either. Grab a helmet.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

Jesse: This is a hard question to answer. I feel like our sound is very similar to a Rorschach test. Everyone hears something different. As a band our tastes run the gauntlet as well, so there might be some stuff in there you wouldn't even guess we were into, for example The Egyptian Lover and Bolt Thrower have both been in the same conversation during band practice.

AU: What is your creative process like?

Jesse: I usually let the boys cook before I step into the writing process, I have complete faith in them, and it has always paid off. We started this band with one rule in mind,

we are going to do whatever we want musically, even if that turns people off. So far, it's been a successful formula.

AU: Have you released an album or any songs recently?

Jesse: We released a split in the spring with our friends in Hex Offender. And we are in the process of finishing our full length LP

AU: In your opinion, what is wrong with the music scene now

Jesse: I wouldn't necessarily say there's anything inherently wrong with the music scene, I think a lot of genres are getting mashed together in our current digital age, and the returns on that have varied from brilliant to "Whose fucking idea was this?"

AU: What are some of your best songs about?

Jesse: The overarching theme of our songs is

about it as well.

AU: Describe your band's live show verbally if you can.

Jesse: Loud and uncomfortable, but we don't take ourselves completely seriously. Uneasy listening.

AU: What's the music scene like in Toronto these days?

Jesse: The GTA in general, ebbs and flows, the Hamilton scene is absolutely killing it right now with bands like Mortuary Slab, Last Retch, and Absurd for examples. And Toronto has some amazing bands like Workers Comp, Sundowner, Not A Soul, and the absolute legends themselves, Phantom Lung (HI ANDY).

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

Jesse: We're taking the majority of 2025 off to focus on our full length, its about 50% finished at this writing, but we will be playing a couple shows here and there

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Jesse: Don't take life too seriously, because we're all worm food anyways, and don't park next to fire hydrants.

IG: @BurntKnivesban

BurntKnives.bandcamp.com

You can also find Burnt Knives on Spotify, Tidal, Pandora, Apple Music, and YouTube.

Photos by MG Ommert / @mgmphotoco



generally a commentary on how fucked up the world is, and how it doesn't seem to be getting any better. But we try to have a sense of humor

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Silent Night, Deadly Night

Surviving the Holidays with Billy

Interview with Actor Robert Brian Wilson

Calgary Horror-Con Panel Moderator:
Katrina Kryzalka

It's a killer Christmas miracle! Come one and all to hear Robert Brian Wilson for joyous tales about legendary Santa slasher *Silent Night, Deadly Night*.

AU: Welcome to Robert Brian Wilson, who we all know as our favourite killer Santa Claus. Can you explain how you first got into acting?

Robert Brian Wilson: My girlfriend at that time and I were on spring break in Palm Springs. We were having dinner and a gentleman came up to me and asked if I was an actor and I said no, and he said, "Well, I'm a manager in the business and I could represent you." I was like, wow this is kind of weird. He gave me a business card and I didn't think much of it because I never really had any aspirations to act. I was an athlete. I was in college and I decided why not look into it. Maybe there is something in this for me. So, I went and

met him and he handed me a script and said "Go ahead and prepare for this and when you're ready, we'll run through it and we'll see if you can do this." So, I was reading the script and again, this wasn't real familiar territory for me. So, I'm reading and reading. Then he's like "Are you ready?" I'm like, "No." So it went on and on and finally the third time he asked, I said, "No not quite yet," and he's like "No bullshit. We're going to do this now." I was like "Oh, okay." I was kind of freaked out about this dude because I didn't know if he was legit or not. So, we stood in the middle of his office and delivered the lines back and forth. He said, "Good, right on, you can do this." I said "What gives you that indication?" He goes, "You can read."

Wow, okay. He said, "Let's do it again." There's a part in there where we kind of go at each other a little bit when we get to that part he says "I want you to just try to live in the moment, and just if something provokes you and you want to do something and react then go ahead and do that." So, we're doing the scene and he punches me in the chest. I'm like, wow, I didn't like that. Then he did it again. He went for it a third time and before he could get his hand on my chest, I grabbed him by the lapels of his jacket and pinned him up against the wall in his office and he screamed out, "Okay, okay, okay!" He goes, "You could really do this. You have in you what you need. I was trying to check to see if you could be somewhat truthful in the moment." And I was like, "Yeah, I could do this." So, he said "What we'll do is we'll get your headshots and we'll put together a resume." Of course, I had nothing to put on the resume, so he made up a resume for me. It's a true Hollywood story, I got discovered.

AU: Do you think when he was seeing if you would lift him up, if he was testing to see if you could lift up Linnea Quigley?

RBW: That's funny. He had some foreshadowing. No, I don't think so, but he was a big dude.

AU: You were a young fit athlete. In the Linnea Quigley scene, did you have any kind of stunt



double or did you do that all on your own?

RBW: There was a stunt double that came in and threw the axe. At some point he throws the axe when we're in the fight, it flips around and sticks in the wall. I couldn't do it. I tried it but I just wasn't practiced enough. So, a guy came in for that. But as far as when Linnea and I were struggling when I was putting her on the antlers, the director asked me a couple of times, "Hey, can you do this?" I looked at Linnea and she's a real slight little lady and went, "Yeah, this isn't going to be a problem." So, no double there. It was all me.

AU: When *Silent Night, Deadly Night* was first released, how long was it before everyone protested and it was pulled from theatres?

RBW: I would say two weeks.

AU: In that time, had you time to view the movie and did your family see the movie?

RBW: Yes. We went to the Directors Guild of America in Hollywood, that's where they did the premiere. I took my family. The moment the film

ended and the lights came up in the theatre, my father looked at me like a real concerned parent and said, "What the hell did you do?"

AU: It had a re-release and then it became a giant cult classic. Was it weird when all of a sudden people were rediscovering the film?

RBW: The film is now 40 years old. I left the industry maybe 8-10 years after the film came out because I had children and responsibilities that were more serious than me trying to pursue an acting career. Then 10 years ago one of the producers on the film wrote me a note and asked me if I would like to come to the 30-year anniversary at the Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood. Of course, I said yes. So, for 30 years, all of this is going on that you're talking about, people becoming aware of the film and I had no idea. I went to the 30-year anniversary with my wife and it blew our minds because we had no idea that you folks even knew of the film,

that you had any appreciation for the film. So that night was a big eye opener. It was a crazy experience. So, it's been the last 10 years that I've become aware of the fanfare and the cult following and it's absolutely mind boggling. I'm so thankful. Quentin Tarantino has a film house in LA called, New Beverly Cinema and he plays the film there every year for two nights in December around Christmas. I just became aware of that a few years back. So, I called the art director of the film house and asked if it would be okay to come out and say thanks to the fans after all these years. I'm still just blown away.

AU: Every single Christmas I'm watching the film. I've shown so many people it and everyone loves the movie. There's so many fun scenes and so many awesome kills. You use Christmas lights, machetes, cutting knives, bow and arrows. Do you have a favourite kill?

RBW: I like the one in the toy store where I'm reciting "All through the house, nothing was stirring, not even a mouse." because it reminded me of the childhood games I played that were real scary. Then to pull up and grab a bow and arrow and shoot her as she was exiting the store. It was terribly wonderful. I also liked the scene where I take the axe and I jump out of the bushes and slice the sledding kids that were being bullies on the hill. They were naughty.

AU: Billy's constantly fighting with wanting to be good but being warped by every horrible thing that have happened to him. Did you use anything when you were on set to remain in the character of Billy?

RBW: If I was a real fancy actor I'd give you some clever answer. But I was so new to it that the only thing I could really rely on was what was written in the script. A lot of trained actors will find other things in their lives to bring out the emotion to fulfill the piece and it takes practice. I wasn't practiced at that point. I was very new to it. So, what you saw is what you got. What really fed my character was everything that was written about Billy before I'm introduced in the toy store. All of the childhood trauma the young Billy went

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through and then just trying to fulfill that when I stepped on the screen.

AU: Concerning the protests and banning of the film, I remember the big thing about the film was that they were portraying Santa Claus as a killer. But you weren't playing the real Santa, you're just a guy pretending to be Santa. Do you feel the criticism was warranted?

RBW: I was really mixed about it because I knew the content was intense for that day and age. I didn't want to recognize the controversy. I wanted it to just go away. I wanted it to just to be my first film. I guess I felt though in my heart of hearts, it was somewhat warranted. But it's also okay to be like, it's a film, it has a rating on it. Don't let your children go. They tell me, it's terrible for the kids. Well, your kids shouldn't be watching this. You're blaming me? I think I'm starting to blame the parents. So, I was on both sides of that fence.

AU: What were your thoughts on the sequel? Did you expect the movie to become so popular that there would be a sequel or that it would become so meme-worthy on the net?

RBW: No, I didn't see any of that coming and I was very unaware of even what part two was all about. The studio came to me when part two was close to being released and they asked me if they could use a couple shots from the first film and

they paid me next to nothing. They were like "We're just going to use stuff that you've already done. Is that cool?" So I said "Yeah that's cool." Then to come find out that it was about half the film. So, they got me on that one. That's Hollywood. Eric Freeman, who played in part two is a friend of mine nowadays. Because I met him out here at these horror conventions and he's a real cool dude. "Garbage Day" is definitely a part of the vernacular around the tables when we're signing. All day, every day, garbage day.

AU: Any favourite scenes from Silent Night, Deadly

Night?

RBW: My favourite part of the film was when

I give the little kid the box knife because it shows a little bit about the character that this boy was so traumatized and confused but he thought he was still doing a good job by punishing the naughty. The fact that this boy was just trying to do what he thinks Santa should do.

AU: It was originally called Slayride. Do you know why they changed the name?

RBW: When I spoke with the producer, Ira Barmak, he said

it just had a better ring to it. He thought it would be more marketability. In the advertising push they advertised this film around Christmas and I think it became a mistake because that's where all the backlash came from. Santa Claus going around killing, it could have been advertised at Halloween and called Slayride and maybe they wouldn't have received as much heat.

AU: You've got an Ice Nine Kills t-shirt on. Did you discover them before or after they wrote the song Merry Axe-Mas about the movie?

RBW: The song was out before I discovered them. Someone came up to me at one of these conventions told me to check them out. Their singer Spencer Charnas is the best ever. All of his music comes right out of horror scripts. So, it's very entertaining for us horror fans.

AU: Any favourite horror convention memory?

RBW: I find the horror fans, you really know what you like and you're very genuine when it comes to kindness and being able to show that to an actor that performed in something that you like. My favourite thing is always just meeting fans and some of the



conversations that I have.

AU: They now have Silent Night, Deadly Night action figures. Do you have a collection of any of the memorabilia of you in your house?

RBW: Yes, I have a couple of action figures. I have a bunch of the stuff that fans will bring and some creations that they've made. I was asked if I had any of the stuff from the film set. I kept the costume for the longest time but I've gone through construction projects at my house. I opened it up, it was all folded up and it had sawdust on it. So, yeah that's gone. But then again, like I said there was that 30-year period where I was just like it didn't have any value. If I was sitting here right now and I just went into my storage unit and found it today, I would look at it differently. But this was 20 years ago when I didn't think twice about this film. So, I was like, get rid of it. It was just one of those things. But some of the current stuff I do like, the caricature of Billy is a very nice rendition of me.

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ASH VS EVIL DEAD

Interviews with Dana DeLorenzo & Ray Santiago

Calgary Horror-Con Panel Moderators:
ReAnimateHer and A CERTAL KILL3R

AU: Any surprising or unexpected challenges that you faced on the set of Ash vs Evil Dead?

Dana DeLorenzo: I mean it's Evil Dead. I think all of it was kind of unexpected. We just got thrown into the deep end of the blood if you will and I think that was a benefit. Obviously Sam Raimi knew what he was doing because both Dana and Ray were experiencing this world first hand the same way Pablo and Kelly were. So it was like you have a parallel with your characters. One thing I learned is that in order to get a good shot on Evil Dead you have to turn off your human reaction. For example, not to duck when things explode or when the blood is coming at your eyes, not to close your eyes. You (Ray) were always really good at keeping

your eyes and mouth open and just taking it and I had to work at it.

Ray Santiago: I guess I would say that you better get it right on the first take because there was no time to change costumes and make up. But you are human and have reactions sometimes. I remember, it was Season 3, and they have these rigs that would pump us with blood and the force would be

particularly unpredictable sometimes. I remember one day they were testing something and it came out full force and I was just like What The Fuck! You snap sometimes.

DD: It really does scare you sometimes. In that scene where you and Bruce (Campbell) got hit they brought out like a cannon. I didn't really think it was going to be at the force of a cannon but it has to explode. That is why you guys both got shoved back. Anytime you are seeing anyone on that show get hit with blood it's really just

the first take. You can't wipe it all off. So when that



comes at you like a jet engine, like in the bar scene in the first episode of Season Two, that was so intense.

AU: Watching Ash vs Evil Dead I really enjoyed seeing the growth with Pablo and Kelly. How they come from trauma happening to them and they grow stronger and closer together. Did you guys pull from anything from your own selves to get that growth? Pablo being a "Brujo" and you losing your parents and having to become this powerful woman to battle evil, how did that go for you?

DD: I never really talked about this but the truth is the day of my first audition for this show was my mom's first chemo treatment. We had just found out that she had cancer. My audition scene was the exact scene you end up seeing in the Value Stop where he goes thank your mother for me. I'm like she died in a car accident. My mom was still alive then but I got really emotional with Mimi Rogers. That's me really crying. Maybe I was a little too dramatic but I feel like that helped fuel the rage that Kelly had. Plus it doesn't hurt that I say fuck every single line. Fuck Cancer.

RS: We didn't know where we were going and so much of that is based off of what you bring to the table. So when a part is given to you and it's yours, what's yours is yours and no one else can play that part like you. What was beautiful is that I got to see what we brought to the table and the producers and the writers take it to a whole other place. I grew up always wanting to be a superhero and I didn't realize

that's what was going to happen with Pablo. So to have the opportunity to become that and step up to the plate, it really just checked a lot of boxes, and it was really fulfilling. For me, I don't really care about the fame aspect of it or the money aspect. I care the most about being on set and that's what makes me so happy. So to have the chance to do that for 3 seasons was just phenomenal.

AU: So after the show ended you got to reprise your roles for the video game?

DD: When they do a video game off of something like a TV show or film, they sometimes don't use



the original actors to voice the role. I was very protective of Kelly so I was like I will do this for free. I need to do this role. I played video games so much as a kid. I was really excited to see how it turned out and so happy that people enjoy it.

RS: I enjoyed being able to go back and bring the role back to life in a different way. I was really interested in how Pablo was going to look. Because I'm like six inches taller in the video game and have buns of steel.

AU: If there was an opportunity to do a reboot with just the two of you, would you jump at the chance?

DD: We're begging for it every day, yes.

RS: Absolutely. It's unfortunate that we spent so much time setting everything up to finally be in a place where you could see these characters soar on their own and then to have that ripped away. It was sort of devastating. So I'd love to do it again.

AU: When you were speaking on your growth as characters, were there any characters that you pulled from to help you develop them?

DD: The one that comes to mind immediately is The Exorcist. I was 12 when I saw it and what blew my mind is when my parents told me Linda Blair



was my age when she filmed it. I had already wanted to be an actor. That was a magnificent performance. I did think a lot about her. How she made me feel when I was watching, what scared me the most, I wanted to try and emulate what that was and find it for when I was possessed.

RS: My grandma, rest in peace, she

was a Santeria. She worshipped saints and was very similar to my uncle on the show. The way that she believed in spiritual forces and the way that he treated Pablo, there was some parallel

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with the way my grandma treated me. So I kind of drew from that.

AU: When you first got on set, Bruce was probably used to the blood flying around everywhere, but how did you deal with it?

DD: It takes a lot of time to set up the rigs. But our first, I guess it's tradition, Sam Raimi as we say blesses you with the blood. So I got off really easy the first time because I was in the trailer in that first episode. There was only supposed to be a little splatter. So Sam takes a paintbrush and just flicks it on because it had to be realistic for what that was. I was like, Oh, this is easy. This is fun. Do it again Sam. Then comes episode two and they brought out this manual crank when they're cutting off my mother's head and they did take after take. We were just dripping. But Ray you had that thing with Bruce in the car.

RS: Yeah, it was wild. It was a really small car. I just remember at one point Mr. Roper's ass was in my face and Bruce was right there. It was probably the second day of shooting and I was trying to act my heart out for Bruce. So I was screaming the

whole time in the car. I just committed.

AU: Anything you were not comfortable doing?

DD: I have a vomit phobia. I started getting a really bad panic attack and broke out in hives when Ray was the demon and had to spit out stuff on me. So they had to use my double.

AU: What is your favourite episode?

RS: I think we had a moment at the end of the first episode when I asked Ash, "How do you feel?" and Bruce says, "Groovy," and then there was this really cool shot that was like a crane and it pulls out. There's the three of us and I turned to Dana and I think I might have said Oh Shit, I get it now. I realize what this is.

DD: We both got chills and so our looks of amazement at that end of that scene are real. So you're like levelled up and because Sam Raimi was wonderful and gracious enough to shoot in order, which never happens. That was the final day of Sam's shooting for that episode.

So all the crew and everybody was there like an audience watching Bruce say, Groovy, and there we are. That's why we always say that moment.

RS: I learned so much more from Bruce than I have from my dad. I felt like it just checked off so many boxes that I never got as a kid. I just felt so

lucky and blessed to have it in the form where Bruce is an artist, he's a comedian, he's a kind man, he has a strong work ethic and I just felt like I really learned a lot from him. So when the show ended and when in the last episode we see him sort of leave, I think, for everybody that was in the car we were all really emotional. Because we knew, just like the first episode was the beginning of this amazing adventure, we knew that the last episode was also the end of this amazing

adventure that only those people in that scene had really shared.

DD: So yeah, our answers are pretty much any episode we shot with Bruce. But also with Lucy (Lawless) and then you throw Ted Raimi in the mix. Watching him and Bruce together was like a show within a show.

AU: Did you keep anything from the set?

RS: I kept a pair of pants that were tailored.

DD: I took as many jackets as I could. I bought another suitcase to bring them all back and I did

keep a Shemp beer can.

AU: What were your favourite kills?

DD: I always have to go with Kelly's first, that deli slicer scene. It was intense and great and I felt like that really propelled me and Kelly forward.

RS: I maybe had only 1-2 kills on the show.



Instead I would say my favourite time dying would be the one where... didn't we kiss after I came back to life that one time?

DD: Yes Episode 5 Season 3.

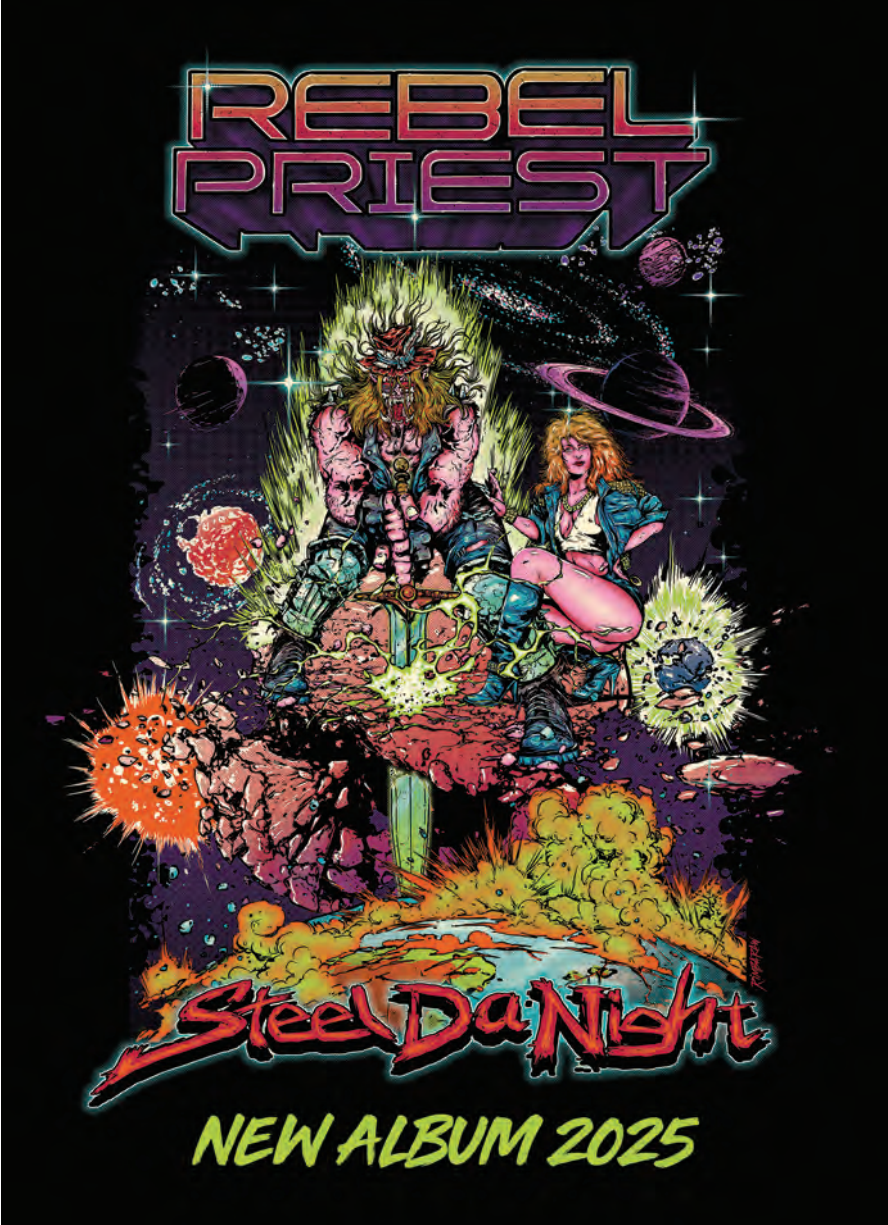
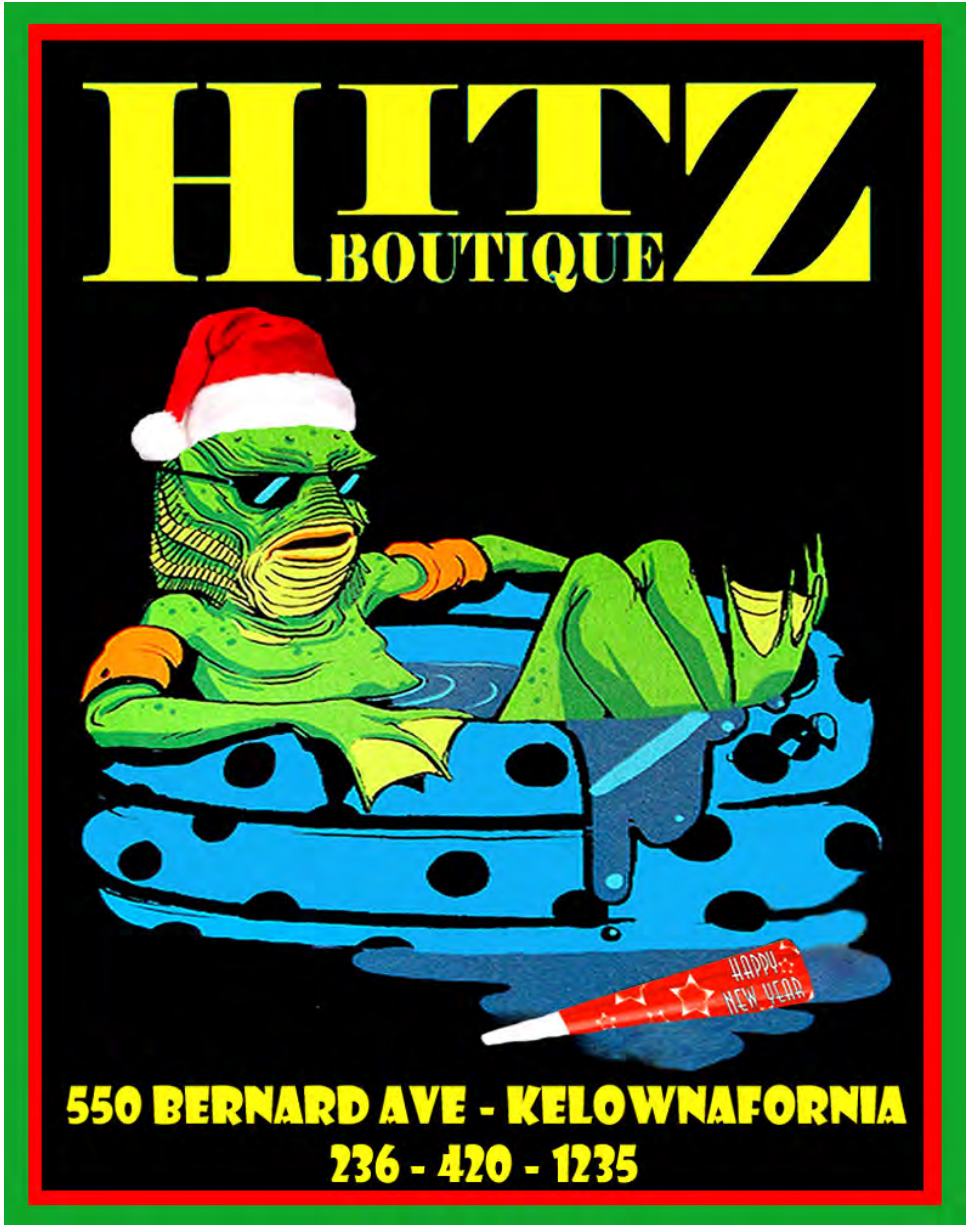
RS: But also I had a birthing scene. So that was pretty wild to birth a demon out of your mouth. My mom asked me what I did at work that day. I was trying to explain that they gave me these phallic objects and said can you just put this in your mouth. Then let it out slowly and suck it back in. You've got to commit, right.

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Panel audio recorded by Cleveland Media Group





Evil Dead Rise

Hail to the Deadite Queen!

Interview with Actress Alyssa Sutherland

Calgary Horror-Con Panel Moderator: Scott Drebit

AU: Now, you're originally from Australia?

Alyssa Sutherland: I am, yes.

AU: I've had so many nightmares of you from your performance in *Evil Dead Rise*.

AS: I play a homicidal, maniacal,

psychotic mother that turns on her children, and people cheer for it.

AU: Seriously, it's a great performance. *Evil Dead Rise* is one of my favourite movies of last year. The setup is so simple. What is best is that it does give you time with your character the mom, Ellie, and Beth and Ellie's kids to establish that relationship. That core of who they are before it gets into the real bad stuff. They're all really well-written characters.

AS: They are, and the writer and director Lee Cronin is really great because I think he established those

relationships really quickly. It's a skill to write a scene and have a good understanding of the two characters in it and I think that's where he really excels. He knows how to kind of punch you in the face with who these people are.

With horror, you can't establish people for too long before the action starts.

People are coming to a horror film to be scared and have the action happen. But at the same time, you do want people to care about the folks that are dying.

AU: Also setting it in the apartment building, was such a breath of fresh air for the series because we fully expect a cabin. We start that way, but only as a setup for the main part of the movie. Then when it gets into the section where the kid finds the record and the book and he stupidly plays it on his record player. I applaud that because no matter how smart it is, there has to be that one dumb decision that moves



things along. Then we get into the main action and you become a deadite zombie mom, and all bets are off. How physically taxing was it when you were attacked in the elevator? It looked exhausting.

AS: Not very. Maybe someone else would have complained but I'm a bit weird. I'm a little bit masochistic. I really

love what I do to the extent that if I have a 20-hour day on set, I'm still pretty happy at hour 19. I just feel an intense satisfaction at the end of the day.

AU: *Evil Dead* movies have the reputation of being physically taxing for their stars.

AS: They do. But again, I love acting so much and I get treated really well as an actress. We have a union. We're protected. We have scheduled breaks. If it's cold, we have people five feet away with a warm jacket to throw on us the minute we're done doing the scene. I come from a fashion background where models are just majorly disrespected. I think how I was treated in the fashion industry set me up to just be intensely grateful for everything that happens when I'm acting. So, I was well suited to an *Evil Dead* film. Because I was like, well, I'm not in the snow in a bikini for 12 hours with some asshole photographer going, just think warm thoughts. Fuck you. Sure, that'll get me through. I have hypothermia, but okay I'll think warm thoughts.

AU: So, modelling is a more taxing industry?

AS: Yes. Also, I don't just go from job to job either. I'm not that kind of actress. I'll get a job. It'll work out well for me and then I may have a period of being unemployed. So, I'm just always really happy to be working. I know a lot of actors that are very talented that just have not been able to get their foot in the door. So to me, if I have a job, I'm going to enjoy it and live it up, because that's just not the reality for so many actors. I'm so lucky and privileged to be in that position.

AU: You've instantly become a horror icon. Where did they shoot *Evil Dead Rise*?

AS: We filmed in New Zealand. It was three months of shooting, but I was there for six months because we filmed during the pandemic in 2021. Upon arriving into Auckland, I was taken by the government immediately to their quarantine for two weeks. Then we had two weeks of pre-production and then we started filming. We filmed for about two and a half months; we were eight days from the end of filming and then there was a COVID breakout and the entire country shut down. We had two months of serious lockdown. We went back to filming and I think we had another 10 days or so after we finally came back.

AU: When the movie was done, did you think, we've got something really good here?

AS: I think we were all like, this is pretty cool, because we would just do these crazy things. But the lockdown was tough because we all had to come back after two months of being isolated and away from one another. The fear is, am I going to be able to keep doing what I was doing? We had to figure out how to film the end of the film. We filmed chronologically, so when we went into lockdown there was no end to the film. There was nothing that we could be like, we can cut these things together and cobble something that'll make it work. So, we had to come back and figure out how to end it while socially-distancing. So, it just changed the scape of how everything had to be filmed. I honestly got on the plane and I was like, "I don't know if this is going to work," but Lee the director pulled it off. He's just brilliant.

AU: His first movie, *The Hole in the Ground*, is terrific as well. They obviously saw the talent and knew

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he could pull off the really wild stuff.

AS: He is also a really big *Evil Dead* fan.

AU: How familiar were you with the original *Evil Dead* franchise and did you feel any pressure going into the new one because the originals are somewhat comedically-centred and the new one is just downright brutal.

AS: I watched them when I found out that Lee wanted to meet with me for the role and yes, I did feel pressure for a few different reasons. Part of it being that it's a franchise where there's already a fandom and you want fans to be happy and pleased with the end result. But secondly, just in general, I felt pressure because a horror film is only as good as its monster. If the monster isn't

scary, the whole film just doesn't work. So, it felt like I had the weight of that on my back. To have to be really good because if I sucked, then the whole film was going to suck.

AU: When working with the child actors in *Evil Dead Rise*, were they ever really scared while you were acting?

AS: No, not at all. It was only really Nell [Fisher]. She was the youngest, she was about 9 or 10 when we filmed. She was really young and there are a lot of things we did to sort of protect her. She didn't read the entire script. Also, she came and saw some of the makeup process that I was going through. She would never see me for the first time in a day on set, because the set was really quite dark.

AU: In a lot of the scenes it seems like your body language and facial features are telling a lot of

their own story. What does the homework for having that many facial expressions look like for this kind of role?

AS: I think my face is just naturally pretty fucking expressive. It's the first role that I've had that felt really technical because there's a timing to horror. So, there's this technical thing that you have to do and especially if you're doing stunts too. So, the challenge is to execute all of that technically, but to put in the emotional performance at the same time. Every now and then, I would watch a take to understand what could be done better. I could stretch my face maybe a little bit more this way and that could be kind of creepier. So, it was kind of a mix of trying to just feel it and let it fly.



AU: One thing for me that made it so scary compared to some of the other *Evil Dead* movies was that you had these relationships with the kids and the monster side of it was using that to manipulate them. Did you treat them in your head as two separate characters? The monster and the mom?

AS: Yes, they were two separate characters. I gave a name to the demon. Like this is his spirit, that has been caught and is just tortured and awful and horrible. So, then I decided, depending on the moment and what the scene was, the demon would maybe sometimes let Ellie come through, but just to fuck with the kids. So, it's really mostly the demon that's always in control and then every now and then, maybe Ellie comes through.

AU: You've cited Jim Carey in *The Mask* as inspiration. Was there any other role that you used as inspiration for Ellie?

AS: Not really, no, because I wanted her to be different to anything I'd seen. I didn't want to repeat anything. I watched a lot of iconic monster villain kind of roles because I didn't want repeat and do something that people had already seen before. I don't even know what made me watch

The Mask. It might just be because he was playing two different characters. There was a zaniness to *The Mask* that I think I saw especially in *Evil Dead 2*. It made sense in my head and I kind of went with it. I was like, if she's just enjoying this whole insane ride of what she's doing to these kids, that's pretty messed up.

AU: Was the make-up process hard for?

AS: No. I didn't really have that much. The prosthetics that I had, there were a couple of pieces on my face, but they were separate pieces. A lot of what I had was like a full body paint. To make me look quite ill and veins and red because I was meant to have been scalded in the bathtub, but that was just time-consuming. The prosthetics on my face, really, I didn't have a problem with them. If I had to have had a full-face prosthetic, I think that would have been a different story.

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Panel audio recorded by Cleveland Media Group



EVIL DEAD 2

Interview with actress Kassie DePaiva

Like Deadites released by incantations from the Necronimicon, so are the days of our lives.

Join daytime deadite Kassie DePaiva for an EVIL DEAD II experience.

Calgary Horror-Con Panel Moderator:
Katrina Kryzalka

AU: You're a songwriter, singer, actress. Was Evil Dead 2 your first film credit?

Kassie DePaiva: Probably my really one and only. I did another film called We Are What We Are. Jim Mickle directed it. It's really good but I think I die in the first opening sequence, it's about cannibalism. I've done some small short films but Evil Dead was right out of the box. I was 25 and it was first thing I ever auditioned for. I think I begged Rob Tapert, Bruce Campbell and Sam Raimi at the audition. I can really scream. I know you're taking a chance on me because I haven't done anything but because I am singer, I really can scream.

AU: Did you sing for them in your audition?

KD: No, but I had been on the road singing with a soul singer named Bobby Womack. I grew up in Kentucky, therefore the country accent, and I'd been down to Nashville and I'd sung on the Grand Ole Opry already when I was 18.

So I had a cassette of my music so I gave that to them. Actually Sam liked some of my songs. I said you could put them in the movie if you want. He didn't.

AU: What made you want to pursue singing and acting?

KD: I was raised in a very small town in Kentucky. We a thing called 4-H where we had talent shows. I sang in my church. It was always something I thought I would grow out. Then I was really fortunate to have a great high school speech and debate coach and I started being a part of that program and the theatre program. Thank God, because I can't really type and it was just something that I was able to make a living doing. I've been very blessed. Like Evil Dead, who knew 37 years ago that I would be signing autographs in Calgary, Canada,

AU: How many people yell, Bobby Joe at you?

KD: They always make me miss Dan Hicks who played Jake. Who is a lovely, extremely talented actor and he's a little older than me. I was so intimidated on set because he took his partial plate out and he didn't have his teeth. Oh you're my husband and I'm like, okay I am a pretender.

AU: Was the Evil Dead 2 shot on a set or was it shot in a cabin?

KD: It was shot in Wadesboro, North Carolina in the middle of summer. We shot it in an old high school gym. It was incredibly hot. They built a cabin in woods for the external stuff but the set inside the gymnasium was where they had the interior and where she ran around where

the blood stuff came through the walls. They had a generator with air conditioning but while we were shooting you had to turn that off because of the sound. It just got hotter and hotter, you had all that fake blood on you and the flies were sticking to you. But it was a great learning experience. Sam was so nice, he really helped me understand camera.

AU: Was there anything during filming that you told Sam Raimi you didn't like or you wanted to reshoot?

KD: Like I knew any better? The only interesting thing is when I was cast the shot where Bobby Joe was dragged through the woods and the vines tear her shirt. So they cast me and then like two weeks later, my agent called me and said, well, they want you to do frontal nudity. Well, tell them I can't do it. That's one of the reasons I continue to do soap operas because there was no nudity. I never wanted be that kind of actress. That was the interesting thing, because I almost didn't do the part because they

wanted to change that to make it a little bit more sexy. But then Sam changed his mind and I was grateful and everything kind of worked out.

AU: For the tree scene, the makeup was so cool. Can you explain a bit of the makeup process and what it took?

KD: The makeup artist Greg Nicotero was really great. They had to do body moulds of my arms, my legs and my face. I still have the plaster mould of my head. Then when they put on the



prosthetic, most of that stuff was done in reverse camera. Like the swallowing of the eyeball. They shot the eyeball coming toward the mouth but my reaction when the eyeball came into my mouth was a reverse shot.

AU: For the scenes with the dragging of the tree, did you have a stunt double at any point?

KD: I did and she was like 5 foot 2. I'm 5 foot 9. I guess they used a long camera lens or whatever. We were dragged by an ATV. I was on a board and we did the close up in the middle of the night and I thought it was kind of cool. But they did have someone for when it was really dangerous.

AU: Have you ever watched a big screening of the movie with a crowd?

KD: Yes the first time I saw it. I had just got back from filming Evil Dead 2 in North Carolina and a week later I auditioned for the Guiding Light. It's an American soap opera. It was a three week process and I ended up getting it. I shot the movie in 1986 it didn't come out until '87 around October. I had already started airing as Chelsea on the Guiding Light and I had never experienced a movie where people talk to the screen. At horror films people yell, Don't go in there! They're talking and that was a really trippy thing. I was friendly with Sam after the shooting so I went to see the movie with him. That was really cool. People were yelling at Bobby Joe, Don't go out there! That was fun.

AU: Was there lots of people that recognized you from Evil Dead 2 and Guiding Light?

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KD: As I was watching the movie a girl in the front row said that's that girl in my story. When you are that age and it's happening you don't know how special the experience is when you're in it. It's only years later you can reflect and see what effect the movies or the soap opera stories have on other people.

AU: Did you have a favorite soap that you enjoyed working on most?

KD: One Life to Live. I played Blair for 20 years. I met my husband, my pregnancy was written into the story and I liked the character. But I'm so not her. The only thing that we had in common was our bra and shoe size.

AU: Do you enjoy appearing at horror conventions?

KD: Yes, you guys are crazy. Y'all coming with your children. You got tattoos all over you. It's a cult following. I'm a small part of it. You guys know probably more about Bobby Joe and Evil Dead 2 than I do. Because you've probably seen every DVD, every toy, every poster. I've got the original poster that I don't even hang up because it scares the shit out of me.

AU: So you're not a horror fan in real life?

KD: I would say no I am not. When I was 13, Jaws

and The Exorcist came out that same summer. I don't swim in the ocean anymore and I lay in bed asking, Is the bed shaking? The Exorcist scared me so much. I think Chucky that's okay, but anything that deals with the demonic side of stuff scares me. Like I thought The Shining

wasn't terribly scary, I thought it was interesting. But I don't go to them. I'm going to leave that up to you ghouls.

AU: Were you approached about the TV show Ash vs Evil Dead?

KD: I think I had my agent reach out but they shot it in New Zealand. But there must have been an episode where they aired a flashback of Bobby Joe because I know I did get a residual check. But no, I was really bummed. I could have been a deadite. I mean evil Ed bit my head off.

AU: I think you would be a perfect character to come back because you kind of just vanish into the woods. It's very open ended.

KD: I feel the same way.

AU: So if they did some kind of reboot, you would be down?

KD: Of course. I think Bruce Campbell is brilliant. Sam is brilliant. Ted Raimi is just wonderful. We all did a horror con, Sarah (Berry) was there, we were all there and Danny was still alive. I was never in touch with any of these people until this con. You don't realize how the movie bonds us together, just that one summer in 1986 in Wadesboro, North Carolina,

AU: Have you ever seen the Evil Dead musical? **KD:** Yes. I did go to the opening of that in New York City and I sat beside Bruce. We weren't in the splatter section, but it was so freaking hilarious. Once again Bobby Joe is mushed into another character. I don't know why she's not important enough to be in the damn musical.

AU: You mentioned the pressure and challenges regarding nudity in the movies. What were some of the other challenges you faced as a young actress?

KD: I think probably my biggest challenge was being insecure because you want to present yourself as a professional but you've really never been in a professional situation. So you're kind of flying by the seat of your pants. Also the pressure of a young girl to remain true to yourself as well as stay presentable, sexy, and all that kind of stuff while holding on to your integrity.

AU: When you have a hard day on set, is there anything you practice?

KD: Alcohol. I go home and say "Honey build me one, a big one and then build me another one."

AU: What's your favorite drink?

KD: I like bourbon. I grew up in Kentucky.

AU: Any plans for the next chapter in your life?

KD: What's my next chapter? Shit! I don't have one. I'm mostly at home drinking Manhattans.

AU: Sam Raimi has become an iconic director. Could you elaborate on working with him?

KD: He was funny and after the movie we lived together for about six months. Then I realized that he was definitely a workaholic. But yeah we dated, but I felt our lives were just different. But he was my boyfriend for a minute, it's a little claim to fame for me.

AU: Any funny memories with Bruce Campbell?

KD: Every memory with Bruce is funny, but he's a very dedicated actor. He works really hard. I sat in awe the day he did his plates and tumbles, his shtick. It was really wonderful to watch their process. I loved watching all the makeup and the blood and the green bile. To get this movie rated instead of blood they used green. They called it



green bile instead of blood because if it had been red it would have been x rated.

AU: Do you remember what they made the green bile out of?

KD: A lot of it was Karo syrup and food coloring and then maybe liquid detergent. Anything that had that kind of thickness. Karo syrup is sticky and that's when the flies would come.

AU: Do you know if Bruce's hand was an animatronic or was done it with stop motion?

KD: I believe it was an animatronic that was remote controlled, like a toy car.

AU: Evil Dead 2 is so artistic and crazy.

KD: It is so brilliant. If you've watched any of the documentaries, I talk about when they shot the deer head scene. But I was in the sofa. Laying in the sofa moving the cushions and giggling. That's me. It's like, yeah I was in that scene. Really? Yeah, I was the sofa. Maybe if they do another movie I can be the sofa.

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Entering our 20th year of operation, we reached out to some of our favourite people and asked to reflect on what 20 years of Absolute Underground means to them!

Aeryn Shrapnel



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

AS: I'm Aeryn Shrapnel, aka Stitch, and I'm best known for being a menace... and I guess editing AU. I also used to host a live game show that benefited the Victoria Sexual Assault Centre at Logan's Tavern of the Damned. RIP.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

AS: I started writing for AU in 2016? 2017? I actually can't remember, but I took over editing in January 2024.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

AS: I thought it was a cool place to get good music recommendations. I'm always looking for new music and shows to go to.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you? Why is this kind of publication important?

AS: The more I work on it, the more significant it feels to me. AU is where the weirdos can get together and share their art with other weirdos. I want to hear what these weirdos have to say and support them so they can continue to create. I often feel like art is the only solace in a society that's becoming increasingly dystopic.

AU: What do you like best about it? What do you hate most?

AS: I love meeting freaks and discovering new music, art, and movies. I love being able to support the scene in the best way I know how. I hate when I have to tell someone we don't have room for their article. I hate word counts. I hate fucking up deadlines. I hate fucking up in general.

AU: Who should we put on the bill when we resurrect Rising Scum Fest?

AS: Chappell Roan. No, but actually I'd love to see some old and some new Island and Vancouver classics. Hoosgow, Knife Manual, Isotopes, Chain Whip, Gadfly, Hedonist... too many to name. I can admit that I actually like Chappell Roan though, I don't care if it makes me a poseur.

AU: Who should we interview next?

AS: John Waters. Devo. The B52s. RuPaul.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

AS: I like the piggy SNFU cover from issue 52. Also, the Punk Rock Bowling cover from 118.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary of Absolute Underground.

AS: I've only been involved for seven or eight years, but I'm curious about the depths of the impact this magazine has had over the last two decades on the Canadian music scene. Thank you to all the readers for keeping it alive and for all the artists, record labels, and businesses who have contributed over the years. Cheers to another 20.

Photo by @__meanlittlemama

Billy Hopeless



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

BH: Billy Hopeless, its written on a bathroom stall somewhere I'm sure

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

BH: It's been 17 years and not one pay raise, can you believe it?

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

BH: Boy I hope they pay better than the last rag.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

BH: It's the last of its kind in Canada, a truly alternative bloody rag.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

BH: Because all the other rags are nice and clean and don't want to get into the bloody stuff we do.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

BH: The pay/the pay.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

BH: There's been so many greats, but since I'm answering these on Eric Bloom's birthday, I'll go with Blue Oyster Cult. I finally got to learn what a Screaming Diz-buster is.

AU: Who should we put on the bill when we resurrect Rising Scum Fest?

BH: You can't afford us.

AU: Who should we interview next?

BH: I tried to get an interview with Taylor from Taylor and the Swifters, but they only would offer the guitarist, so I'd like to interview Anne or Nancy Wilson of Heart, as you gotta have Heart!

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

BH: I really used to like when the Vancouver band Curious George would play "Wish You Were Here" and anytime Chi Pig would sing Devo's "Gates of Steel".

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

BH: How about that pay raise, boss?!

Blag Dahlia



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

BD: I'm Blag the Ripper, best known for being a rock legend! I represent the Dwarves and the Ralph Champagne Revue.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

BD: I met Ira at a compulsive sex addicts convention. He apologized for being Canadian and we've been friends ever since.

AU: What did you think when you first read Absolute Underground?

BD: I thought, "Cool comics, I

wish I knew how to read."

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

BD: It means Ira is off the streets, and that's key to a functioning society.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

BD: Independent music and art are the lifeblood of the underground. The Absolute Underground!

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

BD: It's free, so that's nice. I hate that they mention other bands besides mine.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

BD: I like the one where he dissects Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow and even includes comprehensive footnotes in the scholarly edition.

AU: Who should we put on the bill when we resurrect Rising Scum Fest?

BD: Dwarves and whomever else.

AU: Who would you like to see interviewed next?

BD: Me!

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

BD: I like the one where the 12 Apostles look confused when the bill is presented after the Last Supper.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

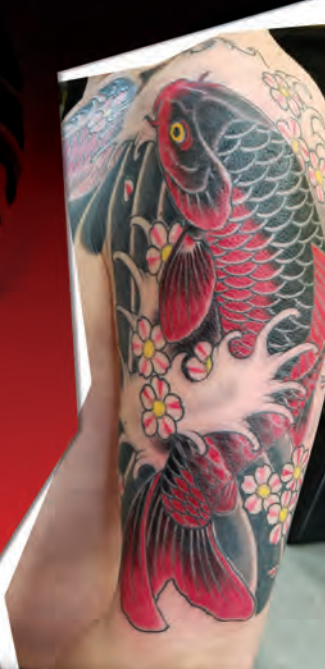
BD: May you have 20 more! AU Forever! 54-40 or Fight!

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Betty Bathory



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

BB: Bloody Betty: Entertainment terrorist. Holly Holy: frontperson of Daddy Issues. BB Allin: GG Allin impersonator. Betty Bathory: owner and operator of rock n' roll soap company Underground Botanicals.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

BB: Absolute Underground has been supporting and reporting on my many ridiculous ventures since day one 20 years ago. They have printed many profane (and obviously hilarious) interviews and photos.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

BB: This kind of publication is crazy important to all the participants of the music, entertainment and art scene of all levels. It has been bringing awareness to all forms of Canadian artists for as long as I've been a (semi)functional adult and I hope that continues for as long as people are still reading and looking at pictures.

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

BB: I mean is there any other answer other than anything involving Dan Scum?

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

BB: My favourite cover was the one I was illustrated on with GIANT tits.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

BB: Just wanna say thank you to Ira and all the weirdos who keep this thing going.

Photo by Wayne Hoecherl

Dane Loucks



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

DL: My name is Dane Loucks. I'm a local musician who has played with The Purrvets, Start with the Cobra, DANEZIG, Buzzard, Evil! and countless others it would seem. I'm also a professional wrestler named Damien Caines and photographer called shootsmut.

AU: What is your history with

the magazine?

DL: I think I was in it a few times; one time I was actually interviewed and my guitarist rewrote all my answers. I've picked up the magazine from wherever I could find it since I started playing locally.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

DL: I think I was pretty young and drunk when I first read it, so I just thought it was cool and wanted to strive to be in it one day.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

DL: I think that anytime you publish something that kind of caters to the outskirts or outsider artists it's very important. I feel like a lot of people have a hard time finding somewhere to belong and something like this can definitely keep people in that scene in the know.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

DL: I guess it wasn't an interview but there was a Jerry Only Misfits show at Sugar (which happened to be the first time I saw the Switchblade Valentines) and outside of the show someone was handing out an issue of Absolute Underground that had an article calling Jerry Only a phony and I really enjoyed that.

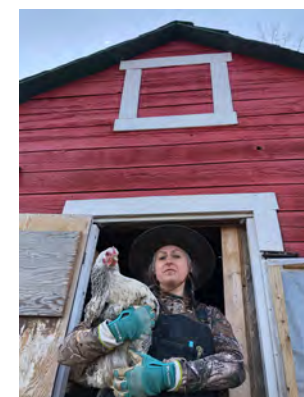
AU: Who should we put on Rising Scum Fest?

DL: Probably not Jerry Only. Just get Andy Anderson to throw the bands together. Also, Bison.

AU: Who should we interview next?

DL: Jerry Only.

Demonika



AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

Demonika: I have lots of good memories of watching Ira do interviews on the fly in busy/loud clubs back in the day, in awe of our fearless leader. I also really liked the Elvira Issue 104. She's what childhood dreams are made of. A recent one I did was with my favourite author Edward Lee in issue 108 in 2022, which come to think of it, almost time to do an update on the man! We have lots of amazing interviews we've done.

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

Demonika: Acid Bath! They are causing such a commotion with their resurgence and the cancellation of the Sick New World Festival in Vegas has lots of people wishing they would go on tour.

AU: Who should we interview next?

Demonika: Dax Riggs, I don't

is an underground and indie book review section. I also do collages, sometimes covers, occasional interviews and whatever else is needed to be done graphically that I can help out with.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

Demonika: I thought it was nice to see a free newspaper that was not put out by yuppie posers. You couldn't, and still can't find a magazine like this in Canada. The people who make it happen work so hard at it, and it shows.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

Demonika: It's a middle finger to the industry standard, which is now living and breathing online in this 'world' that doesn't actually exist and I don't live like that. It means holding something in your hands that you created with a bunch of other creatives, together. It's the scene in your hands and you can see how vivacious and much we all do in a year, it's crazy. Art will never die; it's not about likes and influencers.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

Demonika: It's important because as I touched on, it's the print industry living and breathing in your hands. Remember back in the '90s you could walk into any coffee, record shop, or bar and there would be a shelf in the entryway filled with all kinds of papers, now they are empty, except for us and maybe a real estate mag. It's surviving the death of all of that. I used to work in the newspaper industry, needless to say it doesn't exist in person anymore for a reason. I like that we say "No, we're not doing that," stand tall and lean in.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

Demonika: Mostly all pluses, but that deadline sure creeps in fast! Ha! Keeps me on my toes and in practice of always being creative on the fly. It's not like the internet where all these rouge voices are on a soapbox with grating opinions— these are straight forward subjects that we can all understand and are passionate about.

think we've ever held court with this elusive creature that I can remember.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

Demonika: The ones that I got to create always stick out in my mind, I remember what calamity we were going through as a team at the time. Some were done with my design skills, others with my art skills, and sometimes both! Issue 110 was the most recent one that was a full-blown art piece that I created and of course the Issue 100, our 100th issue cover was really fun to look back at and see all those old covers.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

Demonika: I love that we are still chugging along and making it happen even though the odds are stacked against our survival. If that isn't punk, I don't know what is.

Douglas A. Ewen



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

DAE: My name is Douglas A. Ewen and I am the President of SICK aka The Sudbury Indie Creature Kon in... Sudbury, Ontario. Austin Powers moment!

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

DAE: I have been advertising in the zine for a while now! Over a year? I read it every month, I brought it into Sudbury and people love it so much they ask me on the street for a copy! Not a lie actually, more of an inconvenience.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

DAE: Why is this free? Dude don't like the mighty dollar?

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

DAE: Everything we stand for at SICK. Discovering the SICKest and most unique voices, minds, and creatives in independent art. This magazine is a fucking lifestyle! You love music? Film? Horror? Counter Culture? Art? Tats? You are in the right place and probably an alright person.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

DAE: Because it gives the few a voice against the many. It is there to support, inspire and spread the word if the independent world. It is part of a subculture that is not always explored or celebrated!

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

DAE: I love the new cover art every month. I love how it has movie reviews, sections for tats, the writers are down to earth and not uptight assholes. You always discover so many new things. I do not hate anything about this magazine. What kind of question is that? Haha

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

DAE: The Killer Klowns interview with the cast and crew. Who the hell knew that movie was coming back and it got a game? I didn't.

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

DAE: Living Dead Girl. Call them, they are coming up!

AU: Who'd you like to see interviewed next?

DAE: John Carpenter. Tom Savini. Do some slashers, that would be cool.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

DAE: W.A.S.P. Seriously, every one of my buddies took one.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

DAE: Keep kicking ass!

Duane "Chaos" Nickull



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

DN: I'm Duane Nickull, stage name Duane Chaos, Vancouver and Vancouver Island boy. I am well known for music—mainly punk and metal, writing, recording and touring with various successful recording bands like Rampage, 22nd Century, The Sacked, The Rochchilds and currently playing guitar for Rock City Riot, a Judas Priest Tribute. To a lesser degree, I am a former UCI World Cup Downhill Mountain Bike Racer (represented Canada at the world championships in Cairns, Australia), skateboarder, former GP Motorcycle racer, former and championship winning Formula A Superkart and Porsche Club of America PNW series overall winner for racing a turbo 911. All of these pale in comparison to my best role ever—dad to three amazing humans beings (and AU reader and enthusiast, of course).

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

DN: It was the only education any of us ever had or needed. While not far off the truth, I loved it as it speaks to me, my lifestyle and I am obviously not alone as it has grown in size while other publications have shrunk. A certain Vancouver mag (The Georgia "ya-all-need-to-get-this" Straight) is now only slightly larger than a postage stamp with 6-8 pages. AU grows larger every issue and is where I have been pushing people to tell their shit to the right crowd for ages.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

DN: The first issue was an early one. I didn't make the connection that it was you (Ira) whose dad ran the

fireplace business in Nanaimo with Monty's dad Bean, but something was good about the issue I read. I pick it up whenever I can because it shows me the real pulse of life.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

DN: I want to support it (by the way, renew my subscription, and y'all— you can get it delivered to your home so you never get disappointed). It also has been an outlet for me to express myself. After the deaths of my bandmates and besties Randy Rampage, Brent Johnson, Zippy Pinhead, Jesus Kryslar, etc, you encourage me to write the obits. It was part of my healing to express what they truly meant to me and who they were in life so others would know them as I did. There are no words strong enough to support what those opportunities meant. Still, I hope I never have to do that again.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

DN: WORD! It is truth and it is the pulse of a movement. I see you at shows in Vancouver, Punk Rock Bowling all over the place. AU represents. It is like a map of life. It is also important because it does not fall into the same traps the mainstream media does. It's sort of under the radar, yet more relevant to most of my crowd. Put it this way, Rock City Riot only advertises in the AU. We get more people who come to see our Priest tribute set (next one Dec 14 at Phoenix) from AU than just about anywhere else. I also personally discover a ton of new bands, people, events from AU.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

DN: Only thing I hate is it is only six times a year, but monthly publication is more of a wish than a hate (such a negative word) of the status quo. Best is that it is still growing in size. Each issue is like a new world to explore. Who is playing and where? Who is having sales?

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

DN: 3 Inches of Blood's comeback was recently memorable. The Clive Barker cast stuff rocked too (think Gwar was also around that time).

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

DN: Rock City Riot if you want a Priest Tribute but my other band, the Resurrection of Rampage is also an option (featuring two ex-members of Annihilator!). Anything that Betty is part of, Dayglos of course, Wolf Venom, and of course Chasing Phantoms, and Greasy Hush Money who we are playing with on December 14. I met these dudes named Torrefy at a bar too and they seem pretty keen on metal, so ask them as well!

AU: Who should we interview next?

DN: I would love to see an honest interview with Robert Llewellyn. He is my boss at my day job but played Kryton in the BBC's *Red Dwarf* series. He is an eco-environmentalist-geo-political-science-punk disruptor of normal things and as funny as people get. If you interview him though, throw him curve

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I've seen The Shit Talkers live a few times. They're funny, they kickass and they connect with their audience very effectively. Their latest release Quack is a great album. The singing on it is great and it has a bunch of quality songs. "Put a collar on it" is a ripping punk rock tune similar to something Nashville Pussy might play, then a few songs later is Phone Phone Phone and it sounds like it could be on Frank Zappa's album Freak Out, They finish it off with my favourite track "Walk of Shame". There isn't room for me to tell you why I like it so much but what the hell do I know anyway, go buy it and decide for yourself.

Murray (cretin) Acton Dayglo Abortions

Excerpt from Absolute Underground
Album Review Issue #111



balls like "Which member of Motörhead was your favourite and why?"

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

DN: All the Halloween ones satisfy my goth-horror needs. Artistically I am torn between photos and the drawings. The Dan Scum cover was great, as was Chi Pig's (RIP friend). I am not sure if you did one yet of JP5's Gerry-Jenn Wilson (RIP sist), but think she deserves some cred.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

DN: Keep going! GO GO GO! Faster, Harder, louder! Do burnouts everywhere and make everything louder than everything else!

Photo by Imogen Bailey

Dustin Jak Schwam



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

DS: Dustin Schwam. I'm a tattoo artist and a janitor. For kicks I skate with the Jaks Team and have played in over a dozen various punk and thrash outfits in Victoria, BC, and one in Van. I

also like collecting records and snowboarding.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

DS: I have a long history with the magazine and have been helping out here and there since the start.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

DS: When I first read it I was relieved because John Threlfall and company had ruined Monday Magazine and the city needed a place to advertise local underground music... so I was stoked.

AU: What does the mag mean to you?

DS: The magazine is a list of what to do and where to go in each city if you are part of the music or skateboard scene or whatever scene is your scene.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

DS: This publication is very important because it gets the info out to people who don't rely on social media, plus the ad rates are affordable and it helps small businesses gain clientele.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

DS: I like the ads the most. There is lots to read and I like the Shred Session section as well, being an old skater. Could do without that fuckin' 477 Tattoo loser's ad though.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

DS: Best interview was with Keg Killers in 2005. We said some pretty harsh shit that would get

us hung nowadays.

AU: Who should we put on the bill when we resurrect Rising Scum Fest?

DS: Fully Crazed, Keg Killers or my new band with Mike Synnuck from Mission of Christ called Condition Zero.

AU: Who should we interview next?

DS: Blasphemy.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

DS: Fave cover was the first one because we didn't know what to expect and it got the ball rolling.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary of Absolute Underground.

DS: So cool it's made it 20 years... I knew it would... rightly so.

Gareth Gaudin



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

GG: My name is Gareth Gaudin and I'm a cartoonist and comic shop owner in Victoria, BC.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

GG: I have drawn comics, including *Danziggy*, starting at issue #1! I'm in for the long-haul.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

GG: I was instantly proud of Ira. It's the perfect distillation of his ethos, work ethic, interests, and talents.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

GG: It's the defining magazine of the city that I love. A perfect time capsule of an era that needed documenting on actual paper.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

GG: Youth culture is notoriously fleeting but community lasts a lifetime. This magazine keeps people connected despite the modern world's attempts to keep us apart.

Ira Hunter



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

IH: Ira Hunter the Publisher and Editor-In-Chief of Absolute Underground. I also write and self-publish the cult horror comic books *Champions of Hell*, *Undead Inbreds*, and *Zombie Jesus*.

AU: What made you decide to start Absolute Underground?

IH: I was writing for The Nerve magazine out of Vancouver for a while, but they pissed me off so I decided to start my own 'zine. Mostly started Absolute Underground to help promote local bands my friends were in. That concept slowly expanded to cover underground bands from across Canada that were getting zero exposure from their local newspapers and other publications.

AU: What was the scene like then?

IH: When I first moved to Victoria in 1993 it was so much better for live music options than Nanaimo where I went to high school. Lots of Victoria punks bands like Micky Christ, Dayglo Abortions, L.I.D., Keg Killers, Alcoholic White Trash, The Shivs, The Jizzwailers, The Sweathogz, and NoMeansNo were playing all the time.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

IH: It's been an up and down journey over the past 20 years. Lots of all-nighters and stress but also lots of priceless experiences and interactions with some of my favourite bands and creators. I hope the magazine provides entertainment and information to its readers and that it has archived many bands that have come and gone throughout the years.

AU: What keeps you going?

IH: I'm not going to lie— every issue almost kills me with the amount of work and stress involved. I've wanted to call it

quits many times, but once I have sent it in to the printers and had time to recover, I am rip roaring to start on the next issue. I have so many diverse interests and love that the magazine allows me to interview people to learn even more about my many obsessions.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

IH: I feel it's important for new bands and underground acts to be able to get the exposure they deserve. Also, for new writers and photographers to have a place to cut their teeth and get published.

AU: What other publications would you say are contributing to the scene?

IH: I feel like there aren't many cool 'zines out there anymore. Everything seems to be online these days. I plan to be the last print magazine on Earth, if possible.

AU: What makes AU unique?

IH: The diversity of our content. We cover everything we think is cool. Tattoos, skateboarding, snowboarding, cannabis, wrestling, horror, punk, metal, hardcore, and everything in between.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about making the magazine?

IH: I love the people I work with and the effort everyone puts in to support the mag and the scene. Hate blown deadlines and disappointing the printers when things are late.

AU: Who are some of the

coolest interviews you've ever done?

IH: It's been wicked attending and covering music festivals around the world. Some of my favourite interviews include Oderus Urungus from GWAR, Hank von Hell from Turbonegro, Dee Snider from Twisted Sister, Claudio Simonetti from Goblin, Cheech and Chong, Manowar, Danzig, The Trailer Park Boys, King Diamond, Alice Cooper, Kerry King from Slayer, Lemmy from Motörhead, Gene Simmons from KISS, Colin McFaull the singer from Cock Sparrer, members of The Damned and the Descendents, as well as *Frankenhooker's* Patty Mullen, and John Kassir the voice of the Crypt Keeper from *Tales From The Crypt*.

AU: What is Rising Scum Fest and who are you picturing on stage for its resurrection?

IH: Rising Scum Fest was a music festival we put on in Victoria for five years in a row. It's being resurrected with a Dwarves show in Vancouver, but would love to bring 3 Inches of Blood, Archspire, and Blasphemy over to Victoria.

AU: Any dream interviews?

IH: Still trying to get interviews with Clive Barker, Iggy Pop, Iron Maiden, and John Waters.

AU: What do you listen to while you work?

IH: Whatever band I am interviewing, researching or writing about or any of the new bands I discover while creating the new issue.

AU: Who is your favourite editor? (Kidding!)

IH: I am extremely grateful to everyone who has helped the magazine strive and survive over the past 20 years. That includes all the editors, photographers, transcribers, graphic designers, art directors, and advertisers. I definitely could not have done it myself.

AU: Where do you see things going for AU?

IH: Just hope to keep surviving and having as much fun as humanly possible while doing it. Been loving some of the themed issues we've been putting together so hopefully more of those on the horizon.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

IH: There's been a few wicked ones recently, including the Elvira one, all the GWAR covers, and the Electric Frankenstein cover by Mike Hoffman really stands out from recent memory

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary of Absolute Underground.

IH: Never thought we would make it this far, but am super proud of what we've accomplished over the years. A lot more work now that I have two kids, Ace Hunter and Dax Danzig Hunter, but I still love what I do. Absolute Thanks to all the readers and supporters. You rule and others drool.

Jason Lamb



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

JL: I'm Jason Lamb - best known probably as a DJ on The Zone @ 91-3 in Victoria, BC as well as the host of the old Punk Show on The Zone. I also wrote a book about NoMeansNo.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

JL: When I was starting my Punk Show back in 2010, I introduced myself to Ira at AU and we became friends pretty quickly, first sharing promotions, and then a few years later we would attend punk and music festivals and 'tag team' interviews with all the best punk artists and musicians. We have had many cool adventures together!

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

JL: I loved it. I really enjoyed how it covers different genres—punk, metal, alternative plus the tattoo and horror community. Loved the layout.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

JL: It's a great resource to keep up on what's going on—especially in Western Canadian punk and metal. I've also been honoured to contribute many interviews and articles for AU over the years.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

JL: Firstly— it's free, which is huge. Not too many free publications out there, especially good ones. AU provides a great resource and exposure for local artists, bands and folks who may not otherwise get their art out there to a larger audience.

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

JL: Nuh-Uh— a local Victoria band that my son happens to play bass for, haha! Also— Fully Crazed, AK47, BUG, Hung Up, The Isolastics, Knife Manual.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

JL: Happy anniversary Ira and everyone at AU! Thanks for keeping things weird and scary for 20 years!

John Carlow



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?



RONFEST

A Benefit for Ron and Dianne Reyes

Friday, December 20, 2024

Fox Cabaret - Vancouver, BC

6:00 PM - 19+/No Minors

Raising some money for Ron and Dianne Reyes who have suddenly had some serious dark times fall upon them. Dianne was recently diagnosed with cancer and, as if that wasn't a full plate of woe, the company that's employed Ron for the past thirty-two years closed its doors without warning, leaving them without any income. Luckily, Ron has some great friends and they're here to do what they can for the Reyes family.

The Enigmas - a one-off reunion of the seminal 80's Vancouver band fronted by a guy who would later go on to sing for a certain notorious Celtic punk outfit.

Art Bergmann - The Bard of Terminal City himself makes a rare appearance.

Daddy Issues - The sublime and ridiculous antics of Bloody Betty backed by a casting call for the Hills Have Eyes. Bring a raincoat.

I,Braineater - Art legend Jim Cummins shows off the latest model of his classic rock and roll roadster.

If you can't make this event or would like to donate more, the Reyes family has put up this GoFundme:

www.gofundme.com/f/help-our-mom-fight-stage-4-mantle-cell-lymphoma





AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

JC: It gives me the opportunity to stay plugged into the local scene and offer bands opportunities to be seen and heard outside of social media. I meet some really genuine people doing this and many have remained as friends years down the road.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

JC: There's a decreasing amount of free print publications out there, though I've been encouraged to see zines make somewhat of a comeback. My experience is that people still get quite excited about seeing themselves in print. This is something anyone can participate in without affordability coming into play.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

JC: I dunno. It's difficult to hold one above another, but I really like doing stuff with bands that I've shot regularly over the years. I dug a little bit into all the people that have been in The Ramones over the years, I once did a feature piece on The Angry Snowmans, and one on the B-Lines out of Vancouver. I remember talking in some depth with Tony Goluza of AK 47, and that meant a lot to me. Too many to mention.

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

JC: I'd like to see everyone get a kick at a good festival op... (but definitely get Bootlicker) I've heard the word scum used a lot when people talk about Hung

Up so they seem a good fit.

AU: Who should we interview next?

JC: I'm holding on to some great interviews that I'm so looking forward to putting together and sharing. Keep watching. Like to see Richard Duguay in the mag, I'd really like to talk with Clem Burke one day and I'd like to spend a few days talking with Scott Henderson. I've heard this great story recently about how Sid Vicious was beaten on by his own bodyguard. Like to track that guy down. The interview list is too long and would fill a truck full of column space. From musicians to photographers, producers, to artists of all kinds, people have a lot to say.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

JC: I hope to see AU in its usual haunts for years to come. I look forward to all the folks I'll be talking to (and photographing) down the road ahead. I appreciate the magazine because it's helped me give others a voice.

Jon Asher



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

JA: I'm Jon Asher of Asher Media Relations, known as the PR guy for everything loud in Canada and beyond with Rockshots Records, Extreme Metal Music, Exitus Stratagem Records, Gore House Productions, Wacken Metal Battle Canada / USA, Armstrong MetalFest (Armstrong, BC), Hyperspace Metal Fest (Vancouver, BC), Loud As Hell Fest (Drumheller, AB), Decimate MetalFest (AB) and lots of bands!

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

JA: Been working with AU since I began PR 17 years ago!

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

JA: I remember discovering the magazine on my work travels in Western Canada, and knew I must add them to the hit list!

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

JA: This magazine means a lot, not just great content, but that it supports a lot of Canadian music and exposes them to new fans across the country! One of our Canadian gems! I know here in Montreal, people can't get enough of the mag!

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

JA: This publication is extremely important because it helps independent and established bands to be discovered and informs music fans what to check out! DIY for DIY!

AU: What do you like best/



hate most about it?

JA: Love discovering new music and what's going on across the country in each city's music scene! Print more issues!

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

JA: That is a super tough one! My I think the Warriors 40th Anniversary issue was rad!

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

JA: Oh, that is a tough one! Can I be selfish and have a Rolodex of bands for that one?

AU: Who should we interview next?

JA: You know, I recently watched Finger Eleven perform, and I think they can sometimes be underrated. I'd love to read an interview with them.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

JA: The Gwar cover issue was killer!

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

JA: Congrats on 20! And many more! I love AU and everything you do for music! Don't ever stop!

Jon Freeman



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

JF: I am Jon Freeman, owner and operator of Freeman Promotions.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

JF: I have set up many of clients with interviews, reviews and coverage with AU.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

JF: It's awesome to have a magazine that covers this type of music.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

JF: It means a lot. Whenever my artists are playing in Canada or have new projects, I always want them to be covered in the mag.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

JF: It covers metal, punk and more. It keeps the music alive in Canada.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

JF: I like it all, I don't hate anything.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

JF: Anything GWAR related.

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

JF: GWAR, X-Cops.

AU: Who should we interview next?

JF: GWAR for their 40th anniversary.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

JF: GWAR.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

JF: Congrats and here's to 20 more.

Les Wiseman



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

LW: Les Wiseman: a semi-legendary Canadian writer. Carrying the gonzo torch in the later part of the 20th century. Bringing punk to the mainstream with features and the legendary Vancouver magazine rock column In One Ear. Editor of TV Guide. Teaching tough students to be tough journalists at UVic and Royal Roads. Fighting racism at the latter.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

LW: I was in a biker café out near Hastings Park (PNE grounds) in Vancouver. I saw this issue of a magazine with a story on the Genitorturers, so I grabbed it and started reading.

Every page I turned, I thought, "How the Hell do they get away with this!" When I moved from Burnaby to Victoria, I met AU founder-publisher Ira Hunter at a comic-book show at the Ukrainian Hall. When he told me he published AU, I started gibbering with admiration.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

LW: "How can this amazing magazine not be sued or shut down for all its crazed content?"

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

LW: It is a voice for several cultures that remain largely unheard.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

LW: It defies political correctness and woke-ism when the story requires it. Yet, it does not harass those who hold to those views.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

LW: Like: The sheer audacity of its reporting. Wide-ranging coverage of the alternative culture, especially bands.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

LW: Genitorturers, as that issue opened the AU floodgates for me.

AU: Who should we put on the bill when we resurrect Rising Scum Fest?

LW: Scimitar, The Judys, Zafrios.

AU: Who should we interview next?

LW: Betty Bathory, Zafrios, Al

Jourgenson, Dense Milt and The Judys, Pointed Sticks on their European Tour and an oral history of Victoria gang The Jax.

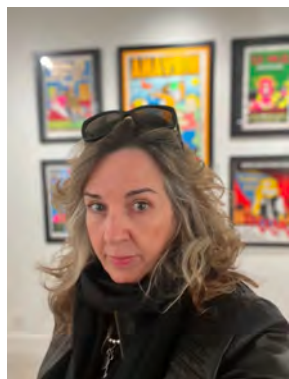
AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

LW: They are all usually pretty awesome. But I really liked the 2023 Iggy Pop cover that was essentially a mosaic of Iggy pics that formed a portrait. It was created by Clayton Hall and Demonika.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

LW: I certainly wish founder-publisher Ira Hunter well and hope he keeps publishing AU for another 20 years. It is the last vestige of what was once known as "the free press."

Melanie Kaye



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

MK: Melanie Kaye. I have been booking, managing, consulting and doing publicity for over 40 years.

AU: What is your history with

the magazine?

MK: We have coordinated setting up press with bands I work with over the years.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

MK: Like myself its a business model based on being authentic and support the music community.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

MK: It feels like minded and a perfect partnership.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

MK: It is an extension of the bands to amplify their message and what they have to offer.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

MK: It takes many different aspects of the music community to fully appreciate the cultural impact of the music scene that is not primarily focused on commercial success but rather being motivated by a sense of belonging and a desire to create something meaningful and inclusive.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

MK: There is too many to choose!

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

MK: NoMeansNo!

AU: Who should we interview next?

MK: Anyone that inspires everyone reading to create work/art that is focused on being positive and promoting

equality for all.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

MK: Chi Pig/SNFU cover was awesome.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary of Absolute Underground.

MK: Happy Anniversary! Keep on keeping on!

Paul Spence



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

PS: That really depends on what era. From 1995-1998 our Devil Dogs inspired band called The Infernos were sort of local legends for insane live shows. 1998-2002 I moved to Montreal and played with Lyle Sheraton and the Daylight Lovers, where I started experimenting with fire on stage, and played some truly memorable American festivals like the Chicago Blackout and Rustbelt Revolt. Years of total mayhem. After that most people know me for the indie movie *FUBAR* that came out in 2002, but around that time I

was also in CPC Gangbangers, a punk outfit that sort of defied the genre and our tour of the US was the most unhinged thing I've ever experienced. I think our album *Mutilation Nation* remains a pretty unique addition to the punk pantheon, with its fucked up influences like Crime, GG, early Bauhaus and Killed by Death.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

PS: Ira did a story about my first film *FUBAR* way back in his first magazine, and has always been a great supporter of my insane shit.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

PS: The coolest magazine in Canada and it wasn't even close. What every honest zine wanted to be, but never pulled off. Smart, and funny, but always on the edge of insanity, and it's always been impressive how pro the whole thing is.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

PS: The only thing that can take your mind off a crappy road stop toilet or the dull drill of a long ass van ride through the mountains.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

PS: I thought this was going to be more about me, haha! No but for real, I love that Ira always asks the best questions, gets to the heart of the matter and does his research.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

PS: I remember the Dez Cadena and Jerry Only interviews being pretty rad. Always liked the Misfits, but I'd never read an interview with any of them, so it was cool to get the back story.

AU: Who should we put next Rising Scum Fest?

PS: They're not around but my dream bill would be The Dirtys, Clone Defects and The Oblivians, maybe with one song of total destruction from The Mummies to destroy the stage as a capper.

AU: Who should we interview next?

PS: Talk to Gus Romer the bass player from Amyl and the Sniffers. No one ever talks to him, I bet he's got some stories.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

PS: Dude gotta go with Volume One, you got my movie in it! Legendary!

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

PS: There's only one thing I think that should be valued higher than genius, and that is longevity. All hail to the insane depravity that leads a man to lend his talents to the unhinged and debaucherous world of rock and fuckin' roll.

Photo Credit: Connie Kimbauer

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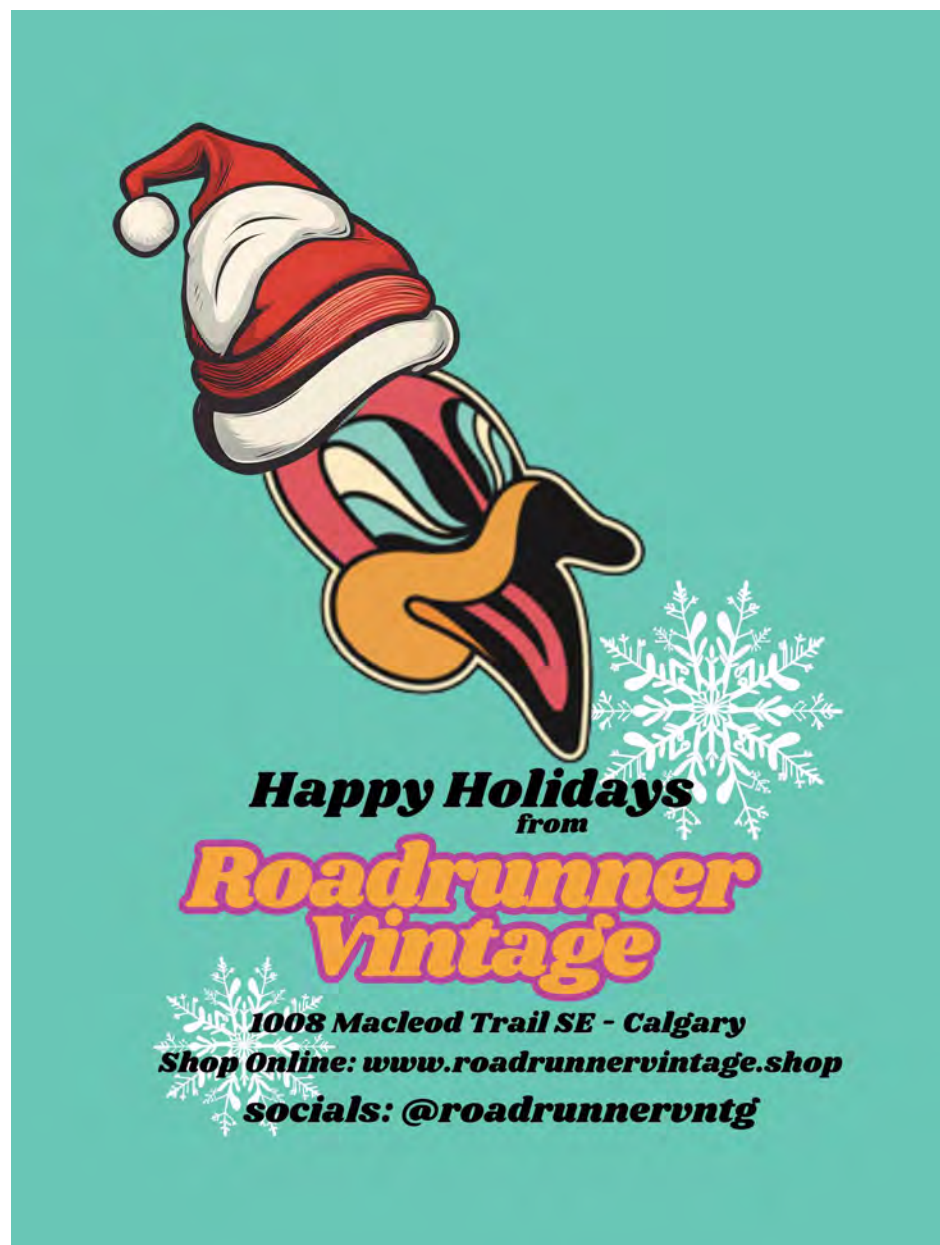
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Phil Hall



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

PH: My name is Phil Hall. I am best known for playing bass in the thrash metal band Municipal Waste. I also have released music with Cannabis Corpse and Iron Reagan. Most recently, I released an album with my newest black metal project Morbikon.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

PH: For decades this magazine has been very supportive of my music and has shown a lot of love and I appreciate that big time.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

PH: I thought it was unique how it felt like a newspaper for freaks.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

PH: It is probably the last of its kind. So, it needs all the support we can give it!

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

PH: Because the underground subculture of pot smoking metal horror psychos need representation

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

PH: I like that Canada has someone that cares enough to put together a zine this well done. And has stuck to it for a long time. I hate that it doesn't make more money.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

PH: I thought it was cool that you guys got the original *Ninja Turtles* artist to do a cover.

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

PH: Hit me up.

AU: Who should we interview next?

PH: Hit up Clownvis.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

PH: Cannabis Corpse had a cover that was pretty sick.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

PH: Keep it up. You guys rule!

Photo by Deryk Wehrley

Ryan Dyer



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

RD: I'm Ryan Dyer. People know me for different things. Maybe it's for covering your band. Maybe it's for introducing you to a Chinese band. These days, it might be for a crude horror story. What is consistent is that I am a writer. What you've read by me will vary on what your tastes are.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

RD: I started writing for it a few issues after the first. It's funny, because I was asked to do an interview with King Diamond way back in those beginning days and recently, I finally had the chance to see him live and I thought about this and then he cancelled. Nice guy, though.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

RD: I thought "Finally, a place where I don't have to censor anything I write." I still feel

this way, honestly. Absolute Underground is a place for literary freedom.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

RD: It means a lot. This is where I began and when I write for other publications, I always want to go back to Absolute Underground simply because it feels like the backbone of what I am really all about. It's important to keep the machine moving and it seems like it still is, with new voices appearing within the pages every year.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

RD: It is a place for writers to cut their teeth. It's a place for bands to get their first taste of press. It's a place for the most out-there shit to be on equal level with mainstream darlings. When you open up an issue, you know you'll find something you already like and something you're bound to like, so it as a basis for both comfort and discovery is very important.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

RD: I think AU should have a bigger online presence. The articles are good but they get overshadowed by I believe lesser articles by mainstream punk or metal sites who have more outreach.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

RD: I actually love my interview with death rapper NECRO. Search the back issues for that one!

AU: Who should we interview next?

RD: More outside of the box interviews. More wrestlers, actors, authors. Maybe Joko Widodo. He's the former President of Indonesia and a big metal fan.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

RD: *Evil Dead: The Musical*.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

RD: Shit, we are getting old. Imagine how we'll all feel when you ask for our final thoughts on the 40th Anniversary.

Sarah Lutz



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

SL: My name is Sarah Lutz and I am best known for being queen of the universe - HAHA - Just Kidding! Best known for Metal warrior via Looters (Marketing, Publicity & Promotion)

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

SL: I have been working with Absolute Underground since the beginning of the first issue, with interviews of artists we represent and booking ads for releases.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

SL: Finally - a magazine that covers and cares about punk and metal music and spreading their knowledge for all to learn.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

SL: It fills a huge void in this country being a traditional media outlet. It means a lot to our industry that they stick around and continue to produce issues.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

SL: It reminds me of back in the day when we used to swap our cassette tapes, you discover new bands you might have never heard of yet. Also, it's still independent!

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

SL: GWAR!

AU: Who should we interview next?

SL: Gaerea

Favorite cover you can remember.

SL: Both covers of 3 Inches Of Blood - the RIP (Oct. 2015) one and the cover from the comeback of 3 Inches Of Blood (Dec. 2023)

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary

SL: I want to send a HUGE CONGRATULATIONS to Ira and team on the anniversary of Absolute Underground! I look forward to reading many more issues to come.

Photo Credit: Ben Alexis

Shane Clark



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

SC: I'm Shane Clark, I play guitar in 3 inches of Blood, I also play in Worse and Elsinore

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

SC: I've had a great relationship with AU, you've been great supporters of 3 inches of Blood since the beginning of the mag, which we all appreciate very much. Personally, when my non-profit organization Neüterhead was active, AU was also extremely supportive.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

SC: The first time I read it I was stoked for the underground music/culture scenes locally and for Western Canada. An outlet for people doing their thing, whether that's putting our music, upcoming shows, art scenes I didn't know existed, cool skateboarding stuff– not just a mag where it's like "Oh cool, an awesome show in Ontario I'm never gonna go to."

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

SC: It means supporting underground culture to me, real support. It's not based on the 'negative review' thing to get people reading. Hiring writers who have knowledge of what they're writing about is always a plus for me. Reviewing a grindcore show by someone who likes grindcore– what a concept.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

SC: Supporting younger musicians, new bands and artists is important and incredibly positive, and on the opposite end of it supporting established artists is just as important because feeds the scenes.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

SC: I've pretty much summed up what I like best about it. Hate negativity impacts the nervous system.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

SC: Dave Brockie always gave an entertaining interview, no issues come to mind, always happy when I'd see something about friends of mine getting coverage, hard work paying off.

AU: Who should we interview next?

SC: You're doing just fine without my stupid opinion, keep doing what you're doing.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

SC: "Self-serving alert!" I really like the covers that 3 Inches got to do; seeing yourself in comic form is very cool.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

SC: Congrats on the 20th year, and here's to many more. Thanks for doing what you do.

Steve Earles



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

SE: I am Steve Earles. I am best known for being a writer, but also have skills in nuclear physics, survival, Lego, ESP, cooking, and basket weaving -

some of this I made up!
AU: What is your history with the magazine?

SE: My friend Jon Asher would often send the mag to me in Ireland. Jon reckoned I'd be a good fit and should contact Ira. Jon being such a great and loyal friend, I didn't have to think twice, so here I am!

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

SE: Just love it, totally unique, great art, great readership.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

SE: I love it, it's special, and it's real, in print, on paper, in 2024, how feckin' cool is that? None more cool, verily!

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

SE: It's important because it is real and in print. In a world where reality is being bent out of shape before our very eyes, a print magazine is like the special person you love, someone tactile to hold onto in a stormy world.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

SE: I don't hate anything about it, it mutates constantly, forever covering new things, I love that.

AU: Who should play next Rising Scum Fest?

SE: I live in Ireland so I have no ideas for RSF but I'm prepared myself, to step up to the stage.

AU: Who should we interview next?

SE: John Carpenter, New

Skeletal Faces, Neil Marshall, Hawkwind, Tom G Warrior, Mantas (Venom), Voivod, Darkthrone and Rush.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

SE: The Halloween one with Graham Humphreys art - we are not worthy, but we'll have to do!

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

SE: As I've said, in a world where print magazines have been devalued by disposable online mags (see also our film and record, and book industries, sadly), 20th year in print is a mighty achievement, here's to 20 more. All Hail Ira and company!

Steve Saunders



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

SS: Steve Saunders. And I guess, as of late, the industrial band Skull Cultist.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

SS: I first met Ira at a comic book convention in Seattle

(ECCC) long ago, and he was doing comics and had this new 'zine. I read the copy he gave me and I was hooked. AU was like The Stranger, but even cooler in its own way. Little did I know I'd end up moving to Victoria.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

SS: Very strong work, really. It was professional enough to where it didn't make me puke, but underground enough that it didn't make me puke. Most of all, it wore its heart on its bloody sleeves, which I immensely enjoyed.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

SS: Independence of art and thought. That the "cult artists" mean something, have a fan base, and that cool shit is cool.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

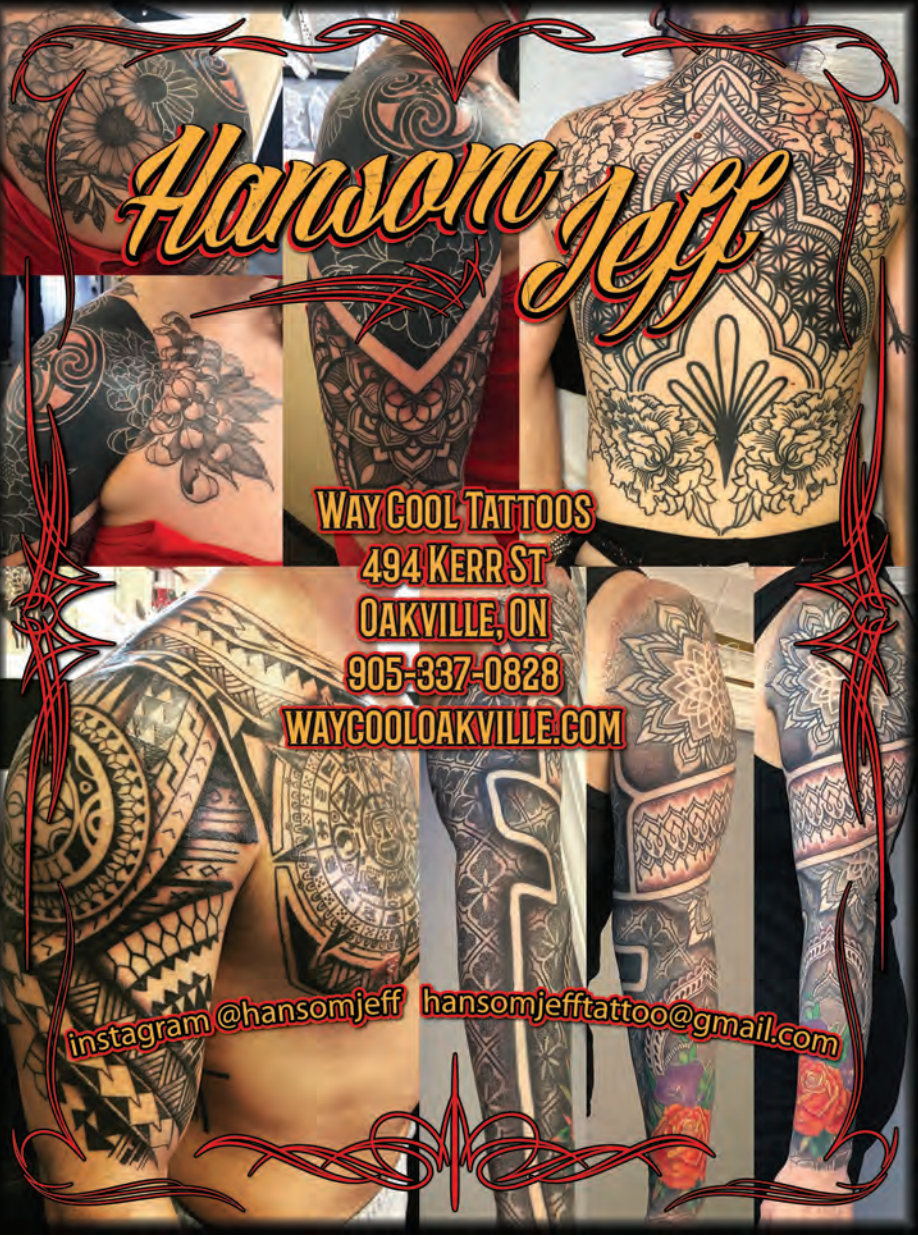
SS: In today's media-driven super-hellscape, having a voice for the true underground in film, art, writing, music, etc. is so goddamned important. It's crucial that folks in our neck of the artistic woods be seen and heard, and Absolute Underground is that motherfucking microphone.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

SS: I love most things about it. I hate that not everyone reads it.

AU: Who should we interview next?

SS: Don Gordon from Numb and Data Void. Or Rhys Fulber

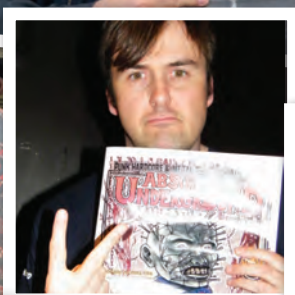




ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND



ANNIVERSARY



ERSARY





from Front Line Assembly et al. Vancouver industrial legends! Honestly, we'll be here all day with all my suggestions. Have I mentioned Chris from Terminus Festival in Calgary? Yeah, all day. While I say I don't hate anything about AU, I would love to see more coverage of goth/industrial music.

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary.

SS: 20 years? Holy fucking shit, Ira, you're old! But, seriously, killer magazine and staff, and a Victoria icon. What little work I've done with AU has been a blast, and everyone is awesome. To see it hit almost US drinking-age is fantastic. I hope it's around for another 20 years, so Ira can run things all hopped up on Ensure... like, sitting there in his Depends, swilling

Metamucil, and shaking his cane at all the punks on his lawn who won't set things on fire. Also, AU has a killer head editor who kicks all kinds of ass. Keep them around, Ira- OR ELSE.

Ty Stranglehold



AU: Who are you and what are you known for?

TS: I'm Ty Stranglehold and I guess I am best known for

singing in various bands in Victoria (most notably The Hoosegow, Angry Snowmans and Knife Manual) and occasional poster artist.

AU: What is your history with the magazine?

TS: Interestingly, I was not living in Victoria at the time the first issue came out. Jay Brown came to visit me and brought me a copy. I was immediately jealous that I wasn't involved, and wanted to do so as soon as I could. Since then, I have written lots of reviews, several interviews and a bit of graphic work... I also can't forget being the spokesmodel for the Pizza Zone ads in the early days.

AU: What did you think when you first read it?

TS: I thought it was great. Victoria (Canada really) was in

desperate need of something like this. I had no idea at that time just how big and vital it would become over the next 20 years.

AU: What does the magazine mean to you?

TS: The magazine will always be a prime example to me of what punks and metalheads can do when they put the work in.

AU: Why is this kind of publication important?

TS: The truly underground sub-genres of music, art or film will never be able to rely on the mainstream to promote them with honesty and integrity (nor should they want to). AU built its own platform on its own terms which is no small feat.

AU: What do you like best/hate most about it?

TS: I love that I always learn about music or art I wasn't aware of previously. I love that small bands get a showcase. I love that it is free and accessible pretty much anywhere in Canada. I don't hate anything about it.

AU: Favourite interview or issue from the past?

TS: I guess like any self-absorbed artist, I would have to say the ones where my bands were interviewed. The Hoosegow (Vol.1 Issue 6), or Angry Snowmans in the first punk rock Christmas issue (Vol. 14 Issue 79) or that fictional account of the Hanson Brothers I wrote under the pen name Dee Dee Oglethorpe (Vol. 2 Issue 9).

AU: Who should we put on the bill when we resurrect Rising Scum Fest?

TS: Forbidden Dimension.

AU: Who should we interview next?

TS: Dead Bob or Amusement.

AU: Favourite cover you can remember.

TS: Issue 108- I got to collaborate (read: layout) with Tom Bagley. Kind of a dream for me that came true courtesy of AU

AU: Final thoughts about the 20th Anniversary of Absolute Underground.

TS: Congratulations AU! This is a milestone to truly be proud of. Here's to many more years of killer content!

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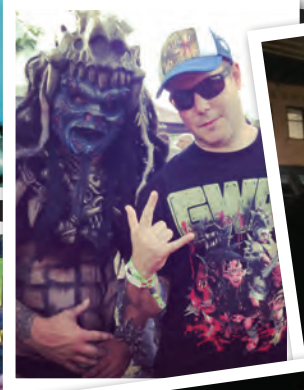
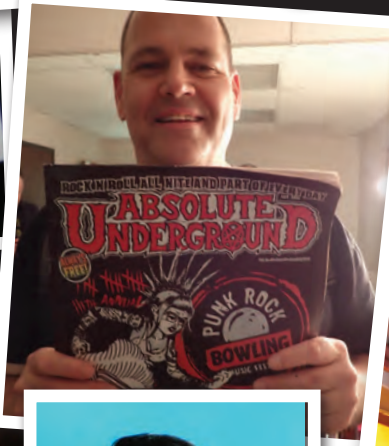
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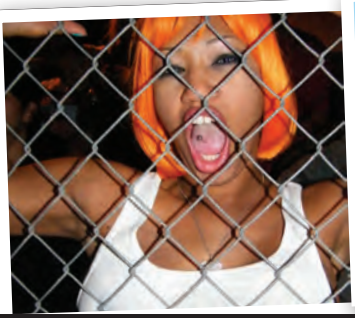
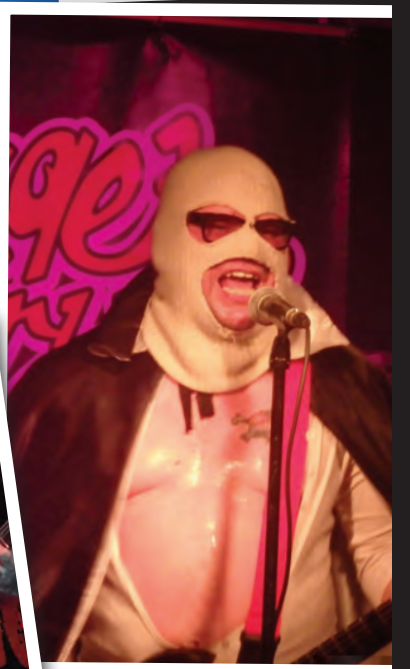
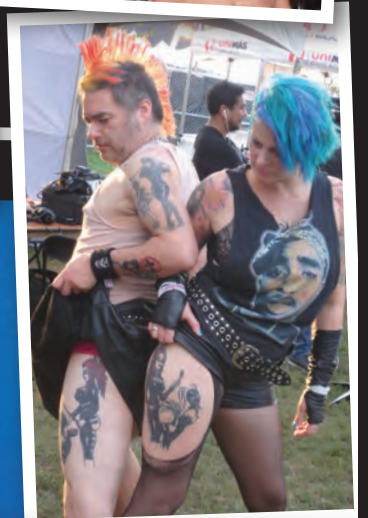


ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND



ABSOLUTE GROUND

X ANNIVERSARY





Blast From The Past - 1984

A 40th Anniversary Celebration.

By Clark'Super'Mantei

Hello again past blasters.

This is a trip back to 1984.

It's hard to believe that 1984 is 40 years ago, yet it was.

My 1984 year started on Boxing Day, 1983 when Vancouver radio station 101.1 played JUMP by Van Halen for the first time. I was so excited and then this keyboard song came through my speakers and I didn't know what to think or how to react. Eventually the song went to number 1 and is still a staple today on most RnR radio stations. I was used to Eddie Van Halen playing guitar and this keyboard soaked song took me by surprise. That week I bought a copy of Hit Parader and Eddie Van was on the cover. This year in January I bought a Guitar World magazine and Eddie was once again on the cover. 1984 remains a truly great year that was special indeed.

I was only 16 years young and I was heavily into

my turntable and I sought out as many new LPs as I could. I remember life as a kid and always loved music. I became a KISS fan in 1976 and nothing else mattered until 1982 when I discovered Led Zeppelin and I eventually discovered prog rock in the fall of 1983, I did however also play the drums since 1978 and was an Air Cadet too. The days of my early morning paper route also gave me music as I'd listen to the radio hits every morning on Victoria's CKDA AM station too. Yet nothing prepared me for what was to happen in 1984. I loved Van Halen and Queen and I avidly collected 45s of hit singles from Sam the Record Man. Life was full of life and music was everything to me. I realized I'd better start playing the acoustic guitar too as drums weren't enough. I thought I'd be 16 forever too.

Haha. Yeah O.K. Concerts became an essential part of my life and I went to as many as I could afford. Living in Victoria meant you'd have to take the B.C. ferry to Vancouver to see most shows. So I thought I'd write about 1984 and what music I discovered then and what came out then. First of course was Van Halen with their 6th studio LP entitled 1984.

I remember my buddy Craig telling me to get in his car and hear the new Van Halen LP on cassette. I had heard "Jump" on the radio but when he hit play I heard the entire album and I was blown away. "Hot For Teacher" was a stellar drum intro that every drummer loved.

Bands like RUSH and Iron Maiden were in full bloom too. There weren't cell phones or texting or Google or Wikipedia either. Landlines and turntables and 13 channels on TV was the norm.

As for music there was now MTV on the television and 'Friday Night Videos' was a must watch by most teenagers. Videos were starting to replace the radio and songs became mini movies.

Madonna was a staple in videos and high school girls would dress like her.

Along with that craze was the new found music of metal music. Bands like Anthrax and Slayer were turning kids into players of the craft. Hair metal was booming. Bands like RATT and W.A.S.P. and Mötley Crüe were on all the music magazines. There was also the 'Air Band' craze where high school kids imitated their favorite bands, talent shows featured the fun bands and contests were in full play. I actually was a drummer in a RATT band that won the Victoria area's contest and we toured high schools pretending we were the band. Fun times.

In the summer I was taking guitar lessons and my teacher turned me onto progressive rock and I discovered bands like The Mahavishnu Orchestra and King Crimson and YES. These LPs made me realize that RUSH wasn't alone in the world of intricate songwriting.

As for concerts that year RUSH was my favorite show. New wave music was everywhere in every format. Hair metal. Speed metal.

New Wave. It was a mixed bag of non-stop fun.

Ozzy was very popular after biting off the head of a bat in a concert. My dad took me to see Ozzy with Mötley Crüe in March. In May I saw RUSH with Gary Moore opening and the way we travelled back and forth in a van was so much fun. Lighting a fire at the ferry terminal after the show was like a ritual. The radio played all the hits of the era.

KISS had gone through 4 guitarists in only 3 years and their 1984 LP Animalize had a huge hit with "Heaven's on Fire" Kids in school all had the hair of the era.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

The culture was soaked in videos and there were so many styles of music. It was a beautiful time to be alive. Years away from downloads too. Concerts were affordable and LPS and cassettes were cheap to buy. Also the Sony walkman was made available. My friend Pauly told me the other day "I'll never forget the smell of the rain on the asphalt as I heard my walkman and discovered the magic of stereo in my ears for the first time." Wow. Me too.

I think back to 1984 and I enjoy the memories. The family vacation in the Okanagan with my cousins and how the radio was always on. I was 17 now and my cousin Karen's gf Laura would drive me around and crank the radio. Duran Duran. The Fixx. Bruce Springsteen. April Wine and Corey Hart and also Prince were all popular and I loved every minute of it all.

It's easy to go back there with youtube and relive it all, yet to really have been there was special. Here we are at the end of 2024 and life just keeps on

keeping on.

Music encapsulates the era it comes from and the memories live within the songs.

Blasting back through the past isn't anything but fond memories to me.

I hope you all have a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2025.

Until the next issue.

Rock out and Rrrrrroll On.

Clark'Super'Mantei

Cheers.



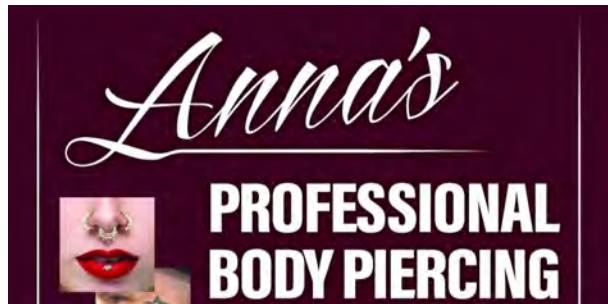


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Anna's
PROFESSIONAL BODY PIERCING

Anna Heckrodt

Professional Piercer

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are your skills to pay the bills?

Anna Heckrodt: My name is Anna Heckrodt or "Anwynn" and I am a body piercer.

AU: How long have you been a piercer? What got you started? Did you apprentice under anyone?

AH: I've been piercing since 1993 or '94, I think we joined Next! In the summer of '93, and I pushed my first needle through a client in November. So, by '94, I was Piercing on my own. I didn't know I was walking into this life and that my timing was perfect, as it came out of the closet and became a legitimate business. I followed my two best friends outta Vernon, who were into punk and skating and was trying to help them break into tattooing, when they said, "Hey, lets go get our nipples pierced". That's when I met Craig "Fogg" Stevens and Roach in The Underground (a clothing store in Vancouver). Charlotte, the owner,

let him sublet out of her store. It was literally a dungeon with tunnels under the buildings at Robson and Granville. I offered to scrub the base of their dental chair with a toothbrush, if he'd give me a job. So, he gave me fliers to hand out and a \$3 commission for piercings I booked that followed through! The first summer, we had a booth at Lollapalooza, it was crazy! The rest was history!

AU: What do you want the readers to know about you as a piercer?

AH: That I am confident doing just about anything and I'll be honest with you if I'm not. I feel like 30 years experience has made me smoother and faster, and clients continuously tell me it was the least painful piercing experience they've had!

AU: How has the industry changed over the years?

AH: From 'bigger is better' to, 'can't it be smaller?' Also, the piercing industry WANTS to go completely disposable, like tattooing, but I love tools, they work with my hook and sometime, they are necessary for removal! Freehand piercing seems to me like you could

get needlesticks easily. People are more germ conscious nowadays than in the past, thankfully.

AU: I'm sure you get this a lot, but how did you learn how to do piercings with a prosthetic arm?

AH: I actually disliked my prosthetics as a kid, they are quite uncomfortable, and without it I can do more... however, I realised I would need a prosthetic hook as a tool for piercing and I had one customized, and tattooed during that first year. I have it shorter and closer to my body

than one typically designed to imitate a hand. Its function not fashion!

AU: Do you find it has any advantages or disadvantages in your profession?

AH: I definitely struggled getting an 1/8" ball on a 5/16" ring on a fresh nose piercing! That's not fun for anyone! However, I took my time apprenticing, making Fogg and others spend the time with me, so I could perform the whole piercing, including getting the ball on from start to finish. I utilize my hook to hold jewelry, screw on barbell beads, etc, I also never get needlesticks!

AU: Where can people find your studio? How can they make an appointment? Do you do walk-ins?

AH: I am now in West Kelowna at Rose & Raven Boutique Salon. Myself and a tattoo artist each rent closed-door studios there, but if you walk in and I'm available, I almost always take people! I prefer a phone call or text, but have a QR code that sends people to a booking page... it's a brave new world!

AU: What jewelry do you offer on site? Do you ever do custom orders?

AH: I have titanium pushpin or internally-threaded style posts for almost all piercing with choices of set gemstones in either titanium or gold. I'm trying to keep my business with Infinite Body Design in Vancouver and Junipurr outta Toronto, but I still get large gauge barbells, circulars, and other custom pieces from Body Circle or Anatometal in the States.

AU: What makes your studio unique?

AH: Well, I am unique! And nice! I book people with lots of time to answer all questions, even size placing jewelry. I still run my autoclaves, so I can do downsizing and up-sizing jewelry. You can book with me to have your jewelry removed, cleaned, sterilized and put back in AND I own an anodizer! So, I literally can turn metal to gold! Okay, gold-like.

AU: Is there anything else you'd like to mention or promote?

AH: Well, I love promoting custom orders for unique jewelry as well as planning piercings for later curations.

AU: Do you prefer Santa

Claus or Krampus? Why?

AH: Krampus because he's way cooler and not a commercial manifestation!

AU: Any plans for the holidays this year?

AH: Go snowboarding every time it snows 10+ cm. I'm having a "Gone Snowboarding" sign made for my door- will be in from 3:30-close those days!

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

AH: Oh my god, I've made so many changes this year, if I'm any nicer I'll be a fuckin' saint!

AU: Final words of wisdom?

AH: Piercing experiences should be enjoyable and if you have a 'nightmare story' maybe keep it to yourself,

instead of filling your kids' heads with it!

FB: Anna Heckrodt

IG: @annasprofessionalpiercing



ABSOLUTE METAL

We Actually DO Get Presents for Christmas Interview with Andy LaRocque & Pontus Egberg

By Kyle Harcött, vocalist of Dirty Vicar & Decadence

The King Diamond camp is in good spirits as I sit down for a Zoom with longtime members Andy LaRocque (guitar) and Pontus Egberg (bass). I'm speaking to them the day after Halloween, where they've just performed a spectacular night. "Yesterday, of course, being Halloween was very special," notes Egberg. "Yes, definitely a highlight," agrees LaRocque, confirming the band were in Boston, "A perfect place for Halloween!" Though, Egberg confirms, "we played the show pretty much as planned." LaRocque explains, "The last couple of shows have been a real highlight, especially. We're two weeks in now and really hitting our stride in tour mode. The crowds have been particularly interactive the last few dates, which always pushes us." The band is currently on tour in North America (supported by Overkill and Night Demon) with "Saint Lucifer's Hospital 1920", a new stage show concept surrounding a sinister hospital, set in a time when medicine was still primitive in its experimentation on the human body.

And does it deliver! If you've seen King Diamond before, you know his stage shows are some of the most elaborate and creative in metal today, and this new show is no exception. With guest vocals and keyboards from Myrkur, the show weaves its way through a tale of medical horror and human experimentation with King taking on the role of a demented scientist at some points.

The big question on a lot of fans' lips is, when can we expect the new album? Promised in 2025, *The Institute*, will be the long-awaited follow-up to 2007's *Give Me Your Soul... Please*. It's rumoured there's enough

material that we could see it released as two albums... "Or maybe even more, we don't know!" Andy advises, "King himself even says he doesn't know where this will end. There have been so many ideas floating around with this concept that the possibilities are endless. We're working on the 'Part I' album, and we'll see where it goes from there."



"We are playing two of the new songs live already, that are going to be on the new album. We're also working up a third song that we're planning to introduce into the set, called 'Lobotomy', but we're in the process of fine-tuning

it to play live." LaRocque continues, "The plan is for us to record these three tracks as soon as we get home from tour. And then to have the whole album completed and ready by the time we are ready to go out on the summer European festival circuit next year, end of May, beginning of June."

Pontus interjects. "And one of the new songs is actually recorded already. I'm not sure when, but it will be released as a single, with a video, very

becoming friends with the local squirrels. Andy, how is King's health doing these days? "I think he's doing great! Of course, you have to take care of yourself when you're on the road and stay healthy. His voice is better than ever, and I think he sounds amazing. The last couple of shows especially have been very, very good." He continues, "And, of course, a lot of that is due to audience support. The last few shows the audience has been really fantastic. It means a lot."

The stage show, as always, is where King truly shines. While his vocals are naturally a star of the show, it's the stage production that is eye-popping. It harkens back to the big, ornate stages of heavy metal yore, and its design invoking images of damned, archaic hospitals is once again, riveting to see. I ask Pontus how this stage production is gonna top the previous tour? But he's not giving anything away: "It's an evolution of the stage we brought out in 2019, but a step up too. It's similar, but we've added a

few new tricks which should pleasantly surprise everyone."

I'm also excited to see what Myrkur brings to the fold. How did it come to pass that she's joined you guys on tour? "I don't really know, but I think at some point, King picked up something she did... a cover or something..." Andy starts, and Pontus interjects "That's right, she had recorded a cover of 'Welcome Home'!" Andy continues, "Which was really, really good! And I guess her and King got in touch and started talking and... she's a great musician! Great vocalist, you know? And having her on board has really worked out well. She's a great addition to what we're working with."

So, will she be lending her guest vocals to the new album? "Well, the tour for now," Andy offers, "but I'm not sure yet what's gonna happen with the album. Too soon to say."

The tour ends the first week of December, with a final date in Mexico— and then the King Diamond Family prepares for Christmas. For my final question, I had to know— do the King Diamond members have any weird or extraordinary traditions at Christmastime? Pontus giggles,

"Well, very traditional on my part. With the family, and at home with traditional Swedish food and decorations... and... we actually DO get presents for Christmas!" I laugh myself— asking heavy metal's most well-known Satanist about Christmas does seem a little ironic. What about you, Andy? Do you have anything weird planned for Christmas? "No, nothing weird, you know, it's kind of the traditional thing— with kids and grandkids, just the family getting together and relaxing."

After a couple of weeks R&R for the holidays, the King Diamond team will be back hard at work in the new year, with a focus on completing

the recording of the new album. With that, we end our conversation with a hearty "Happy Halloween!", because, truly— isn't that the REAL reason for the season?



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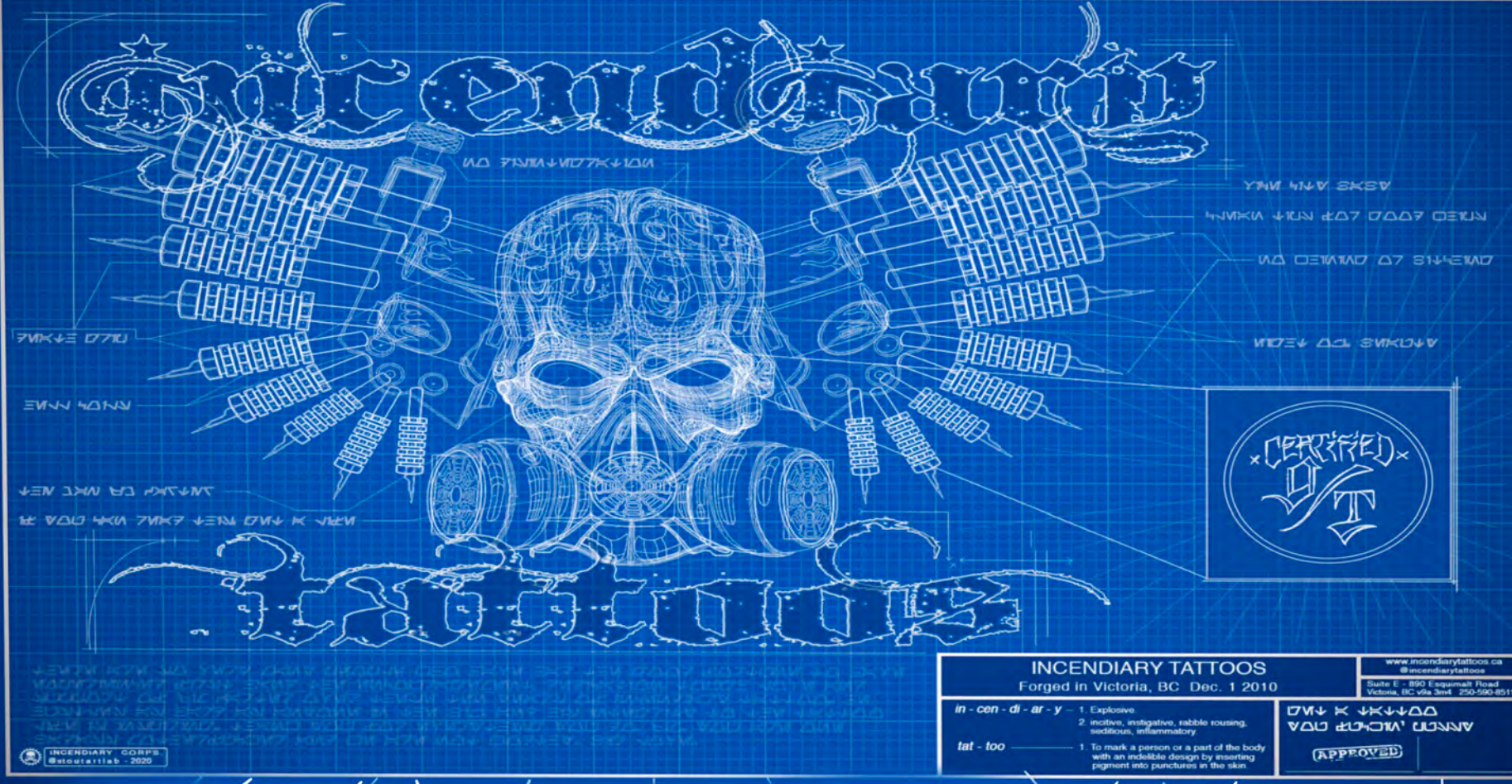


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BLOODPRINT

Interview by AU Editorial

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Kyle Cote: I'm Kyle Cote, the composer and multi-instrumentalist of the thrash metal band BLOODPRINT, and EXIKYE. I'd have to say what I'm most infamous for is being a guitar virtuoso since I was about 16 years old. I'm a solo artist who writes, plays, records, and engineers heavy metal albums by myself.

AU: Give us a brief history of BLOODPRINT, who is in the band and what are you all about?

KC: BLOODPRINT was born out of unfortunate circumstances; one of my best friends had just suddenly passed away. Jon and I were huge fans of thrash and death metal. I wanted to make the music that me and Jon enjoyed together, as a way of coping with the loss, so I made BLOODPRINT to honour him. He was a heavy dude, so that music had to be as heavy.

AU: What's the metal scene in Vancouver like these days?

KC: Stronger than ever! you got bands like Shot Caller, and SCALDING ripping it up, so it looks great from here.

AU: Describe BLOODPRINT's sound if possible. What makes it unique in your opinion?

KC: BLOODPRINT is a mix between thrash metal and death metal with a ton of guitar solos, guttural vocals, fast grooves, and a lot of headbangin' anthems.

AU: Have you released an album recently? Tell us about it! What can we expect to hear?

KC: I've released three albums in 2024. SATAN. SEX. SUICIDE. (EXIKYE) GANGLAND, and CRIMINAL INTENT (BLOODPRINT). All of these albums I've made entirely by myself, from start to finish; all of them available on every streaming service.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

KC: Death, local serial killers, drug abuse, and gang violence.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

KC: 1. "BLOOD OATH"
2. "PIG FARM REQUIEM (BALLAD OF ROBERT PICKTON)"

AU: How will BLOODPRINT be celebrating the Holidaze?

KC: A lot of weed and whiskey.

AU: What is Accelerating Death Records about and who else is on the label?

KC: ADR was started by myself and James Prudy in 2011. Since then, I have been running this small indie label on my own. Only five albums have been released in this label so far, so hopefully soon we can get more artists signed and into the studio.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already?

KC: I have a compilation album featuring the band Ghosts of Garoh coming in the spring of 2025.

AU: Final words for our readers?

KC: If you're a fan of some hardcore shit, you're gonna love CRIMINAL INTENT. Stay metal, and support Canadian artists!

IG: @bloodprint.official

Album photo by Shia Humm



Never Sleep Again: The Elm Street Legacy. The Making of Wes Craven's A Nightmare on Elm Street

Dark Ink, the publisher of the *In Search of Darkness* official coffee table book as well as biographies on Kane Hodder, Gunnar Hansen, and Tom Savini, is thrilled to announce that they will be releasing a new edition of Thommy Hutson's *Never Sleep Again: The Elm Street Legacy—The Making of Wes Craven's A Nightmare on Elm Street* on the 40th anniversary of the iconic and groundbreaking film.

Called "The ultimate dream and/or nightmare for

Freddy Krueger fans" by Entertainment Weekly, *Never Sleep Again* is the definitive look at the making of one of horror's greatest films of all time. "We are honored that Thommy trusted us to get his fantastic book back into print for horror fans around the world. It truly is extensively crafted and a fantastic look at a seminal film that film buffs will love," said Michael Aloisi, founder of Dark Ink.

With a new cover and new afterword by Freddy Krueger himself, Robert Englund, *Never Sleep Again* includes rare and never-before-seen material, over 50 cast and crew interviews, and hundreds of photos. Author Thommy Hutson said, "I'm absolutely thrilled to see *Never Sleep Again* back in print, offering fans of Elm Street and behind-the-scenes moviemaking a chance to revisit or discover for the first time the incredible story behind one of horror cinema's most enduring films. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* is more than a movie; it's a cultural phenomenon. I'm grateful and proud to have been able to help tell the story of how Wes Craven's iconic film not only made it to the screen but helped shape New Line Cinema and influence moviegoers and filmmakers alike."

Including rare and never-before-seen material, this extensively researched, comprehensive look back is the definitive account of the film that began what many have called the best, most frightening, and imaginative horror franchise in motion picture history.

And remember: if you think you know everything about Wes Craven's 1984 horror classic... you must be dreaming!

A must-have for every horror fan's library, *Never Sleep Again* is available in hardcover with dust jacket, paperback, and eBook versions worldwide.

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city's most beloved music venues.

Filmed on June 15, 2024 at The Rickshaw Theatre in Vancouver, BC. Produced by Andy Kidd.

"I've been going to shows at The Rickshaw for 14 years and it holds a special place in my heart. I wanted to produce a tribute that captured the soul of the venue and gave people an opportunity to share what the place means to them and the city."

Director Andy Kidd

View the entire film at www.AndyKidd.com





Interview by Mal Content

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Under the Mountain: Steve from Under the Mountain. Over the years, it seems it's changed a few times... Back in the day, it was showing up to any gathering with a 60 of Jack Daniels, and yes, drinking straight from the bottle. My tastes got slightly better over the years.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band.

UTM: Me and Myles started the band back in 2010 and it took us a good year to find the right members to get going. From day one, we've decided that we don't want to be any specific genre. We write music we want to write and if it works, we go with it.

AU: What's the music scene in Nanaimo like?

UTM: It's had its ups and downs for sure. Thanks to Jay at The Terminal and Rich and Fin at The Globe, the scene has been able to stay alive and it appears to be growing right now. I think there's pretty big things in the Nanaimo scene's future!

AU: Describe the band's sound, if possible.

UTM: I appreciate you adding "if possible" because that's always a tough question. Like I said earlier, we've never tried to sound like anything necessarily, whatever comes out, comes out. What it appears to have been so far is some sort of love



child between high-energy, fast paced rock n' roll and sludgy psychedelic prog metal? Maybe? Let's go with that.

AU: How were you lucky enough to get on the bill with Sebastian Bach for his Victoria show? How was that experience?

UTM: Personally, I'm not even sure how that gig came about. As far as I know, someone suggested

us as an opener so we ended up getting contacted about it. At first we didn't think it was even legit, haha. The experience was great! We not only had to set up in front of his band's gear, but also in front of the other opener's gear. We were left with the tiniest bit of space and we almost didn't even bring all of our amps on stage! But that didn't stop us from rocking the fuck out and having a ton of fun. Of course, our crowd wasn't as big as Bach's but they were really digging it and we made a bunch of new fans.

AU: How would you describe your live show to the visually impaired?

UTM: So, they can't see us, but they can hear us? Poor bastards... Not that we're much to look at either, but at least we put out a lot of energy on stage and there's a lot of hair flying around. Most people think we head-bang because we're "feeling the music" or "have a lot of energy" or something... It's just so the crowd doesn't have to stare at our mugs.

AU: Any upcoming releases we can check out?

UTM: We've released a whole bunch of singles in the past few months and we're gearing up to officially put out our full album titled *Ancients*. It's definitely the thing I'm most proud to have been a part of to

date. Anthony Sharkey (producer, engineer, mixer) absolutely crushed it on this one and it sounds amazing! Oh, and it sounds exactly how I described our sound earlier. Official release date hasn't been confirmed yet but keep your eyes peeled around the end of January.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

UTM: On a personal note, I've been exploring bit of a different way to approaching songwriting. I've taken a step back from writing about sex, drugs, and rock n' roll and have taken a few steps to more intricate matters, such as insanity, anxiety, PTSD (mental health in general I guess you could say), the delicate balance between humans and nature, and the friends we've lost through the years. It was dark times writing a lot of this, Covid and all.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

UTM: All of them! I can honestly say I love all of them equally, and they're all VERY different from

one another.

AU: Any plans for the holiday this year?

UTM: It's our 10-year anniversary for our first album's release on December 23, so Myles and I are going to get together with Tony (Anthony Sharkey) and our past bass player, Curt, and give our old drummer, Fred a call, who now lives in Ontario. I imagine we'll have a solid night of debauchery, as per usual! Every year, my family has a big shindig Christmas Eve, so no doubt that will be happening once again.

AU: Weed or booze or both?

UTM: Honestly, I wish me and weed could get along better, it just doesn't go well with me and never has. Put a glass of bourbon in front of me, though, and I'm a happy man!

AU: What are some X-Mas traditions in Nanaimo other than burning tires at The Wastelands?

UTM: Haha is that a thing? Well, not all of us can be THAT redneck I guess. My parents have a property right near the woods, so I'll usually just go there, spend a bunch of time with family and friends, drink a ton of whiskey, and usually (hopefully in the snow) walk around the woods for a few hours long after midnight. And there's usually at least a week of this, haha.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

UTM: Definitely a bit of a mix of both but I THINK I've mostly been nice.

AU: Any other Nanaimo bands people should check out?

UTM: If you ever have the chance to see Chunkasaurus, make sure you do! They don't play often and they always put on a great show! If you like punk, definitely check out Awkward AC. Danger Box is a young band. I'd say they're "up-and-coming" but they've come, man! And they kick ass! Antler is one of my favourites, same with Blacktop Social. Every Dave Read band: Moths and Locusts, Caveman and The Banshee, Anunnaki. A band that has cum and gone and cum again who is an absolute Nanaimo legend is No Operator. I know I'm missing a ton, but we've got a lot of great music in town!

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? What don't you want your mother to know?

UTM: There's not a lot about me that my mom doesn't know, to be honest. Yeah, I'm an absolute momma's boy and she's my best friend. Then again, I absolutely don't tell her about my benders and drug trips, so let's just keep that a secret between me and you.

AU: Anything else to promote?

UTM: It's a killer venue and we've got our buds Antler, Danger Box and from Campbell River, and our good buddies in Vogue Villains joining us. This is a show you won't want to miss!

AU: Final words for our readers?

UTM: Be excellent to each other!

utmband.com



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Liliana: I'm Liliana. I play drums and jump in on vocals occasionally. We all contribute to the sound in our own ways.

AU: You call yourselves "Real Fake Emo." Can you explain what that means?

FI: It's a mix of tongue-in-cheek and our actual approach to music. We play around with genres that some might not consider "real" emo. We blend everything and don't care much about strict labels. It's all about expressing ourselves, not fitting into a box.

AU: So, would you say you're open to any genre, or do you focus on certain styles?

FI: We're definitely open, but it's rooted in emo. There's a foundation in the sounds that shaped us, but we're never afraid to explore outside the lines.

Raine: Yeah, there's a long-running debate online about what constitutes "real" emo, and we like messing

changing. Later, I got into post-hardcore and bands like Thursday, Fall of Troy, and Touché Amoré. They really shaped the way I write.

Liliana: My drumming is heavily influenced by Jerome's Dream and the mathcore band Breadwinner. I try to find a groove and go all in, adding that chaotic edge but keeping it tight.

Raine: My journey into this music actually started online, in skramz communities at the start of COVID. NOFX and Propagandhi were huge influences, like Freyja said, but I've also found inspiration in a lot of modern emo bands.

AU: How would you describe the Vancouver Island scene for emo and skramz?

FI: It's definitely evolving. More bands are emerging all the time. You've got Wolruss, A Recorded Dawn, All That Decays, Mourn Recif, and Hillsboro. There's a healthy mix of talent.

Liliana: Especially for a smaller city like Victoria, there's a lot going on.

AU: How has playing in Coup D'état differed from other bands you've been part of?

FI: For me, coming from a five-piece band, it feels so much more streamlined. We're a tight group, and there's a clear vision for our sound.

Liliana: We're all super locked in. If someone messes up, there's no drama. We just run through it again. It's refreshing to be in a band where everyone's on the same page and focused.

Raine: This is my first serious band, so I don't have much to compare it to, but I really appreciate the chemistry we have. It makes everything flow smoothly.

AU: What was it like recording your record with Cody at Circle A Studios?

FI: Stressful. We had to condense everything into 11 hours, but Cody's a wizard in the studio. He was already mixing while we were recording, so we got to hear things come together right away.

Liliana: Cody's a brilliant engineer. He matched our intensity and really understood the vibe we were going for.

Raine: It was amazing to see him work. We would record something, then walk over to see what he had on the DAW, and he would already be mixing the track,

AU: What's next for Coup D'état? Any plans for a tour or new releases?

FI: We have a release show lined up for December 13th with some out of town bands we're excited to play with. Then we're releasing a split with Lakeside Amusement Park early next year. We're also throwing around ideas for our next album, LP2. We might even consider reaching out to larger labels.

AU: Anything else you'd like to say?

FI: Just a shout out to the local scene. Check out the new EP from Senza and Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead's latest album. It's been a crazy year for screamo and emoviolence. Keep supporting local shows. The scene needs it now more than ever.

therealcoup.bandcamp.com



Coup D'état

Real Fake Emo from Vancouver Island

Interview by Nick Workman

Absolute Underground: Could you start by introducing yourselves and telling us who's in the band?

Freyja Internicola: I'm Freyja and I play guitar and handle about half the vocals.

Raine: I'm Raine and I play bass and do vocals as well.

with those rigid definitions.

Liliana: It's funny because people get so invested in those debates. We'd rather let the music speak for itself and challenge listeners' expectations.

AU: For people who haven't heard you, how would you describe your sound? What are your biggest influences?

FI: It's hard to pin down, but I grew up on third-wave skate punk, especially bands like Propagandhi and anything from early Epitaph and Fat Wreck Chords. Those records were life-

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Out of Order

Interview by Mal Content

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to? Give us a brief history of your band.

Scott: I'm Scott. I'm the singer and founding member of Out of Order. We started back in Halifax in 2000/2001. Moved to Montreal in 2005 and have put out five full-length albums, two 7" splits, and a full-length demo. We have been consistently touring all over the world in the past 20 years and are currently working on releasing our sixth studio album sometime next year.

AU: Does your band have a specific message?

Scott: Out of Order is a rock n' roll band. We play high-energy and anthemic music. We believe in being yourself. Standing to your own principles, whatever they are, and not caving to the bullshit pressure that is out there for bands to tote some bullshit line. DIY for life!

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

Scott: Out of Order plays a high energy, urgent, and in-your-face style of street rock n' roll.

AU: What is your creative process like?

Scott: It's different for every thing we do. We do believe in a group dynamic of inclusion where everyone has a voice. As the singer, I try to steer the ship the best I can, but everyone has a value and can contribute to the blender of our sound.

AU: Any music currently in the works?

Scott: Our last album, *Under the Knife*, was released in February 2023. We have since begun the process of writing a new album, which we are about halfway finished as of today's date. We have a couple singles off the next album we are gearing up to release later this year.

AU: In your opinion, what is wrong with the music scene now?

Scott: I suppose it's relative to your perspective. What is good for someone might not be good for another person. There are issues that I do have with the current state of affairs though. For one, it's far too easy to just passively listen to music. Streaming has made music such a cheap commodity for people that don't understand how important it is to go out and physically support bands by showing up to gigs and purchasing physical albums, shirts and or merchandise. Growing up, we would have a 15-generation copy of a tape, taped over a tape which we revered and held precious. Music wasn't at our fingers whenever we wanted it. We had to go out and discover it and engage in it.

AU: What are some of things your band does to give back to the community

Scott: We are making art. That can be enough. I won't stand on a pedestal and conflate myself. I'm not a politician. You make someone smile or lift them up out of a depression, that's a form of giving back. There is no need signal virtue. You do what you want to. If that means helping

out at a food kitchen or contributing a track to cancer research, or writing a song that draws attention and raises awareness to an issue you feel important, then do that. That is under each



person's discretion. We live in this world together. We are human first. Start by just trying not to be a dick.

AU: What are some of your best songs about?

Scott: There is a wide range of topics we write about. We write love songs to tracks about history, anger, hypocrisy, and everything from Breonna Taylor, to suicide and death, to simple songs about pressure, and even pizza.

AU: Describe your live show verbally if you can.

Scott: The release of lunacy and spastic aggression. Move and sweat!

AU: What's the music scene like in Toronto these days?

Scott: Toronto has always had some ups and downs. We've always loved coming to play there. We are from Montreal so I don't know the ins and outs of the Toronto scene these days but Bowser from Thrash Panda Productions seems to be holding it down nicely.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

Scott: Yeah, we have a few gigs lined up this October and November in Montreal, Trois Rivières and Ottawa. Then we will be hunkering down to

finish off this album early winter. In the spring there is talk about a little weekender down in Ontario and then we are off to Europe again in May for a few weeks and back over to England in July and August of 2025 to play The Rebellion Fest and tour the UK.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

Scott: If you want to find out about us pick up a record. Listen to the album and read the lyrics. I put myself into all aspects of what Out of Order does. It's my life blood. Stay tuned for our next album and keep an eye out as we might be coming to a town near you!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Scott: I just want to thank you for taking the time and giving us some attention. We really appreciate the help to spread the word and to give platforms to artists like Out of Order and to allowing me to vent.

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PRIOR CONVICTIONS

HAMMER CITY

Interview by Andrew M. Stewart

AU: Who are we talking to?

Prior Convictions: We are Prior Convictions from Hamilton, Ontario.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band.

PC: The band was formed in 2012/2013 by lifelong friends Duane Timbers and John Shields. Two EPs were put out by early line-ups, as well as gigs all over SW Ontario. By 2017, the band was doing more of a street punk/OI! sound which was solidified by Dan Beaudoin and Shane Anderson in 2019. Constant gigs, recording and videos followed, as well as compilation appearances all over the world.

AU: Does your band have a message to give?

PC: Our message is unity and our slogan is "Never give up," which we push constantly.

AU: Describe the band's sound.

PC: A mix of '77 style original punk and UK82 British punk.

AU: What is your creative process like?

PC: Our creative process is collaborative. Most are written by Duane and then given to Dan to put words, melody, structure etc. Then it's brought to the band proper and it evolves as it's played more and more.

AU: Have you released an album or songs recently?

PC: Our most recent release with this lineup is 2022's EP, *Street Punk*. A few songs were released in Dan's absence in 2023.

AU: In your opinion what is wrong with the music scene now?

PC: The biggest issue I see in the scene today is tribalism. Seeing the same names on every bill and every tour.

AU: What are some things your band does to give back to the community?

PC: Our latest community effort was releasing a charity compilation to benefit the Hamilton food bank during the pandemic.

AU: What are your best songs about?

PC: Our best songs are unity songs calling for personal perseverance and communities supporting one another and the usual social commentaries associated with punk.



AU: What's the Toronto/Hamilton scene like?

PC: The music scene is always changing and after a brief hiatus, we're stoked to reunite with old friends and meet all the newer groups and promoters. Toronto and Hamilton have always been welcoming, energetic, and fun shows.

AU: Any shows or tours planned?

PC: We plan on returning to live gigs in the new year starting with See-Scape in Toronto and Vertagogo with Thrash Panda Productions, AKA Bowser.

AU: Describe your live sound.

PC: An explosion!! Big hooks, huge riffs, and a wildly abrasive singer.

AU: Any parting words?

PC: Our parting words are always and forever, never give up!

linktr.ee/PriorConvictions

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Photo by Duane Timbers

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WITH TIME
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Agnostic Front's Roger Miret Looks Back on NYC's Early Hardcore Scene in New Book, With Time

Take a trip back to the gritty streets of New York City's 1980s hardcore scene with the release of *With Time, The Agnostic Front Archives* from the Collection of Roger Miret – the standard hardcover and deluxe editions on sale now at Withtimethebook.com.

Co-authored by Roger Miret and Todd Huber, *With Time* captures never-before-seen photos, flyers, and personal stories that document the rise of Agnostic Front, and the band's enduring impact as the undisputed Godfathers of Hardcore.

"I never got into punk! Punk got into me! I was infected with the best virus life could have given me and as I move on into the next phase of life, I feel the urge now more than ever to share my experiences as a young kid on the streets, on the stage and hitting the road and thought, what a better way than giving you a portal into a magical and exhilarating time for Hardcore Punk taking flight!" said Miret.

With Time chronicles the birth and early years of Agnostic Front, from their formation in 1982 through the release of their seminal albums *United Blood*, *Victim in Pain*, and *Cause for Alarm* (1982-1986). Packed with previously unseen visuals

and the complete archive of Agnostic Front flyers, photos and art—including their 1985 U.S. tour diary—the book offers a comprehensive, behind-the-scenes look at the band's early years as they shaped the sound and ethos of the New York Hardcore Scene.

"These are some of my personal archives that I have cherished my whole life. A time capsule of an era where life presented the darkest days of my life with light at the other end of the tunnel, and that light was ambient even though it all seemed in black and white there was that one colorful rose rising from the concrete grime of the New York City streets," added Miret. "That colorful rose was my life, my soul growing and reaching my maximum being and my purpose and path in life."

The book will be distributed through Revelation Records and available at withtimethebook.com

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The Meringues

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you known for?

The Meringues: Ted Evans (singer, guitarist) and Amanda Pants (singer) of The Meringues— an alternative post-punk band out of Kingston, Ontario. We're known for our wild stage antics, our unique sound, and the dynamic between the two lead singers when performing.

AU: The Meringues have been around for a little while now, can you give us a brief history of the band?

Ted: Amanda and I met at a show that both our old bands played at. I was in a heavier rock band, and Amanda was in a cow-punk band playing mandolin. We connected and eventually started our own band in 2016. At times, it's just been us two and a backing band, but now the Meringues are a four-piece band with Jackson and Alastair on board fully as well. We've worked over the years to dial-in our own unique sound and image, while just staying as true to ourselves as we can.

AU: What's the music scene in Kingston like?

Pants: I would say that Kingston's music scene ebbs and flows. It's dynamic, and has a talented pool of artists and musicians. Its location between Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto has potential to create opportunities, and draws in some cool bands too. Being a university/college town, Kingston also benefits from a steady influx of new students eager to discover new music.

The city has been facing some venue limitations over the last decade, with only a handful of spaces focused on live music, especially for all ages crowds. This can sometimes make it challenging for artists here to find suitable platforms, but lots of great people around the city, and organizations like the Broom Factory and KPP are doing exceptional work to foster the scene, and keep it alive.

AU: Your new album *Pavlova's Dog* just came out and I'm really enjoying the rugged, playful vibes it has. What inspires your sound most?

Pants: I feel like each band member's list of influences tend to be diverse and reflect our eclectic style. When making *Pavlova's Dog*, I was listening to a lot of Amyl and the Sniffers, Surfbort, Starcrawler and my favourite Canadian band July Talk. I'm deeply inspired by women who push

boundaries in music— they motivate me to pursue my own creative passions.

AU: Any favourite tracks you're stoked on?

Pants: "NVR RLLY HNST"— I love the energy it brings to the album.

Ted: "A.I."— I'm enjoying people's different interpretations and takes on that song. Someone said it reminded them of a musical, and I loved that.

AU: There's definitely an electric dynamic between you both; how did you meet? How did you start making music together?

Pants: We actually met in 2011 at a house party that both of our bands, at the time, were playing. Our friendship grew from there, centered around music. However, it wasn't until 2016 that we started making music together. The catalyst was an Alabama Shakes and July Talk concert we attended together. As we left, I turned to Ted and said, "We need to start a band." That spontaneity sparked our collaboration.

AU: Will you be touring the new album at all?

Pants: Yes, we're excited to hit the road! We have a string of shows lined up in Ontario and Quebec this November. Looking ahead to 2025, we're planning to expand our reach to more cities, with a more extensive tour schedule in the works. You can follow our socials and website for show dates and announcements!

AU: Anything else you'd like to mention?

The Meringues: The people who worked with us and helped us throughout the

process of making this album were INCREDIBLE. From recording, producing, and releasing the album, and every little bit that went into each of those days and sessions, we got to work with amazing people. Each and every one of them will forever be in our hearts!

AU: Final words for our readers?

The Meringues: Hope you like our new album! We respond to ALL comments, so follow us and let us know which song is your favourite. We'd love come play a show in your city some day soon!

You can find The Meringues streaming in all the usual places.

linktr.ee/themeringues
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The Hounds of Cuchulain Perform Pogues Tribute Concerts Interview by Mal Content

AU: Who are we talking to?

Wolf Edwards: This is musician Wolf Edwards.

AU: What's on your musical resume to date?

WE: Too much to list!

AU: What was your first exposure to Shane MacGowan and The Pogues?

WE: I was brought up on folk music from the '60s so Dylan, Odetta, Ramblin' Jack, Buffy Sainte Marie, etc. were my first intro to the genre. My first exposure to Irish folk music would have been The Clancy Brothers with Tommy Makem as they were, having moved to the States, a part of that scene. The Clancys were from Tipperary, same part of Ireland as Shane's family. So, when I first heard the Pogues, around '89 or '91, there was an immediate familiarity with some of the songs, particularly trad songs, notably "Dirty Old Town", "Whiskey You're the Devil", "Waxie's Dargle", "Auld Triangle", "The Band Played Waltzing Matilda", etc. I first saw The Pogues on television performing the Ewan MacColl classic "Dirty Old Town" and it was love at first sight.

AU: What was it about The Pogues that spoke to you so deeply?

WE: My family lineage is Irish, Welsh and English as well as Mi'kmaq, French, and Norwegian so the Celtic music in general really hit home when I first heard them, especially the Irish songs. I didn't

know why at the time, but seems obvious now. My mother's side of the family were originally Newfies who eventually mingled with the Quebecois. There were, and still are, quite a few musicians on that side, Celtic music fiddlers, jazz, classical, and country. My father's side was more connected to poetics and literature with familial connections

to the Kerouac family in Quebec, where both my parents are from. The famous writer and poet Jack Kerouac (given name Jean-Louis K  rouac) had Quebecois parents; his father from Saint-Hubert-de-Rivi  re-du-Loup, Qu  bec, while his mother Gabrielle Ange L  vesque was born in St-Pac  me, Kamouraska, Qu  bec. Thus, poetry and the literary aspects of the Celtic music tradition hit home in a deep way since it is "in the blood" so to speak. The music of the Acadians and M  tis peoples, connected to the French Celtic tradition that came with French settlers, was around me at a young age as well. I always had the dream of performing in a Celtic folk music group, even when writing and playing punk rock or metal and The Pogues were always a staple in my listening repertoire. Now that I have made that dream come alive and I have the honour of working with a fantastic group of musicians who specialize in Celtic music, I felt it was time to branch out and pay tribute to Shane and the Pogues who've really done a great job of preserving, in their own way, not only Irish but also ancient Scottish and English music as well. All the while adding their own amazing songs to the Celtic canon.

AU: Is it safe to say The Pogues influenced the direction your musical career took?

WE: Yes, along with The Dubliners, Clancy Brothers, Irish Rovers, Planxty, Wolfetones, The Furys and many others.

AU: Tell us more about The Pogues tribute band you have put together. Who else is in the band and what do they bring to the table?

WE: Yes, so we have The Hounds of Cuchulain who are Madeleine Townley on tin whistle, Irish lever harp and vocals, Dexter Simpson on Irish tenor banjo, Briana Kennedy on the fiddle, Jeff Feltmate on Bodhran and fiddle, Ben Garrison on mandolin, Theodore Waite on double bass and myself on vocal and guitar. We've added drummer Caleb Belknap and Craig Frew of Glasgow on accordion to ensure we have the correct ingredients for the folk rock sound Shane created. So, what we have here is a massive nine-piece group that, with all the variable instrumental

possibilities, can cover the entire gamut of Shane's career, musically speaking. We have the accordion, bass, and drums which differentiates The Pogues from their folksy predecessors, we have the fiddles and tenor banjo, which Shane added to his third act, "Shane MacGowan and

The Popes," then mandolin, harp, and bodhr  n which are featured on many Pogues and Popes songs throughout their tenure. These instruments were important for the traditional sound quality that has always been the back bone of Shane MacGowan's sound. The double fiddles and Irish harp enable us to recreate the lush textures that one would find on MacGowan classics like "The Broad Majestic Shannon," "Rainy Night in Soho" or "Fairytale of New York." No matter what vibe a song has, we can accentuate and deliver. After all, "Waxie's Dargle" is a very different listening experience then "Fairytale of New York!"

AU: When and where will you be performing?

WE: We are performing the "Fairytale of New York: A Tribute to Shane MacGowan and Pogues"

shows at the Duncan Showroom, December 13th, The Paul Phillips Theatre (Little Fernwood - 1923 Gladstone Ave) December 19th and 20th. Best thing to do is follow The Hounds of Cuchulain on social media, as we will be performing the tribute again in March, hopefully the 17th, under the title "Paddy Rolling Stone: A Tribute to Shane MacGowan and The Pogues" at one of the town halls, probably the Edelweiss Club in James Bay. Then, hopefully, in other theatres around BC. If you follow the group, you will also find many appearances of the regular seven-piece, which are always a good time!

AU: What can people expect from your live show?

WE: They can expect to hear a mix of Shane's songs such as those mentioned previously in the interview, as well as the traditional songs that he really made his own. You will hear excellent musicianship and tasteful renditions. I guarantee it will be the best tribute to Shane you will hear anytime soon!

AU: How do you prepare to transform into Shane MacGowan?

WE: Ha! It's not that kind of tribute! We will be performing the songs but not dressing up or trying to imitate the Pogues or the Popes. The great thing about Celtic music, in general, is that anyone can play it their own way and the tune or song will still stand strong. Shane's songs are the same way, and, in fact, are a new chapter within the tradition. No dressing required! When you hear Nick Cave or Sin  ad O'Connor sing a MacGowan song, for example, it's the song writing that is immediately identifiable. The magic of Shane's writing. If it were a M  tley Cr  e tribute, it would be quite a different story.

AU: Anything else to mention or promote?

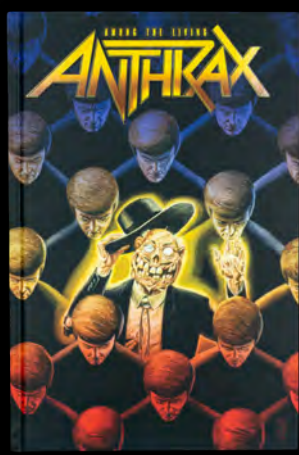
WE: After the December shows, stay tuned for the March 17th show, or thereabout, which will be the next appearance of the tribute band. Thanks to all the fans for their support!

FB: [hounds.of.cuchulain](https://www.facebook.com/hounds.of.cuchulain)

IG: [hounds_of_cuchulain](https://www.instagram.com/hounds_of_cuchulain)

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Photo by Jeff Feltmate 2024



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DOOM CITY RECORDS

AU: Who are we talking to today?

I'm Jeremy from Doom City Records in Duncan, BC.

AU: Tell us about your business.

We're a new store that has just opened in the Cowichan Valley, selling new and used records, local art, and merchandise. We opened on November 1st of this year and we have loved every minute of it.

AU: How long have you been doing this and what got you started?

Selling records is new to me but I've been collecting since I was in high school. It has always been a source of joy for me, so I have decided to follow that joy and try and make it into a living as well as a source of joy for my community.

AU: What makes Doom City Records unique in your opinion?

merch while championing sustainability, supporting and amplifying local artists and initiatives, and fostering meaningful connections through music and culture.

AU: Do you also do custom orders for vinyl?

Absolutely. If there is something you're after, come and let me know.

AU: Can you please let us know what sorts of genres of music you carry?

I'll always try and have something for everyone, and metal is super popular in the area. I'm big on psych, funk, garage, punk, so I am sure I will end up having a lot of that around.

AU: Any special events planned in the near

future?

I partner with some businesses around town for pop-up shops and vinyl nights, so keep an eye out for the next one! I am at Deadhead Brewing on the first Tuesday of every month spinning your favourites and selling, too.

AU: What kind of music do you play in the shop?

The music we play is about as diverse as our selection. Usually aligned with how I'm feeling at the time haha.



what you like.

AU: Do you also buy back used records?

I sure do, send me an email or pop by if you're interested in selling.

AU: Are there any local record labels you work with?

Not yet, but I look forward to soon. I love everything that Supreme Echo has been doing in Victoria, so I will start there.

AU: Where is Doom City Records located?

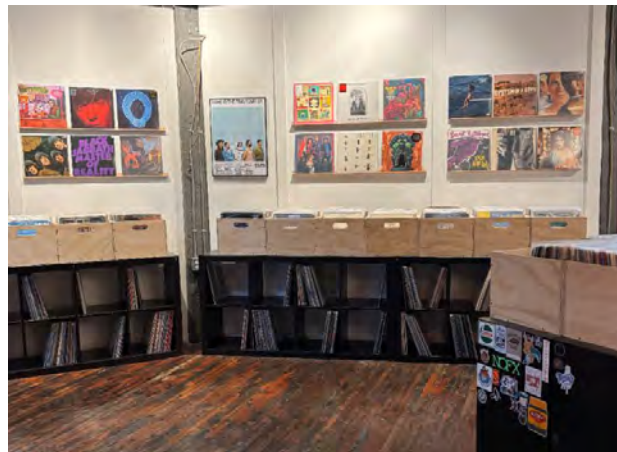
We're located in Duncan, BC. We're downtown in the Duncan Garage building, just above the beloved Garage Bakery and Café.

AU: Anything else to mention or promote?

Support your local. Thanks for reaching out, Ira and Absolute Underground!

AU: How do people find you online?

We're on Instagram @doomcityrecords and Facebook (Doom City Records) and our website is doomcityrecords.ca



AU: Are customers able to listen to the records before buying them?

For sure! Let's give it a spin and make sure it's

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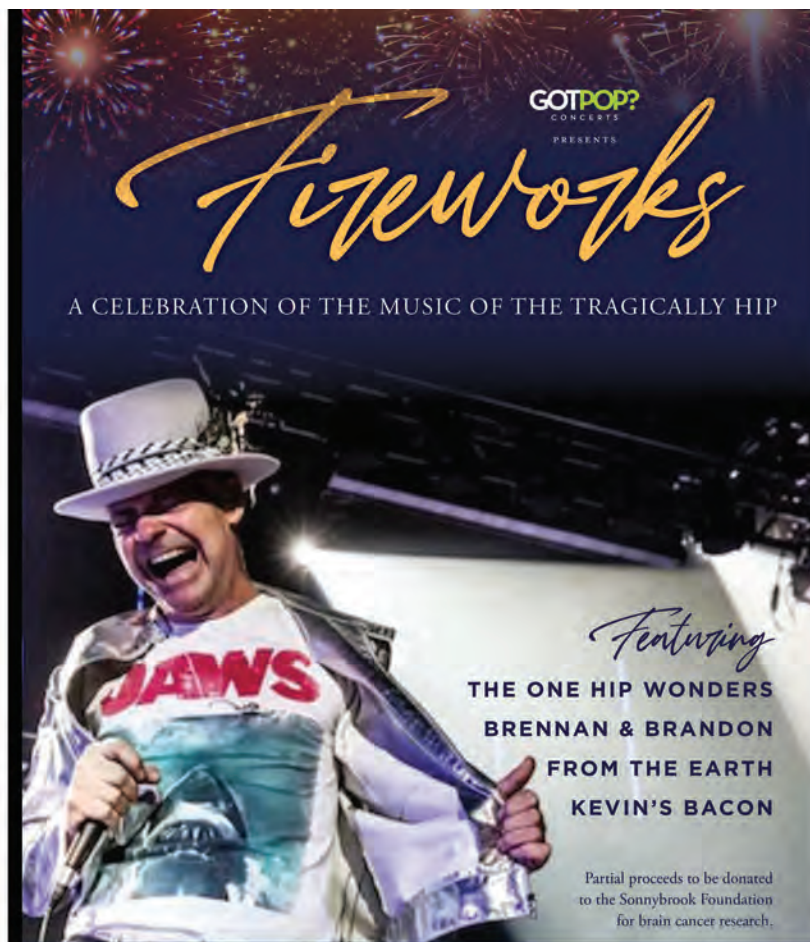


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Matterhorn Records

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you best known for?

Johnny Matter: Hey, I'm Johnny Matter. I've been part of the local music scene for over 25 years, played in numerous bands and was a show promoter for many years. I now own and operate Matterhorn Records.

AU: Tell us about your business.

JM: Matterhorn Records is a boutique record store located in Mintage Mall in East Vancouver, BC. We

buy, sell, and trade records, cassettes, CDs, and also concert tickets.

AU: How long have you been doing this and what got you started?

JM: Matterhorn Records has been open for six months now. Prior to that, I was doing record shows on the



DROP THE NEEDLE

weekends for a few years. I love music and records. My father's record collection got me into music and records at a very young age.

AU: What makes Matterhorn Records unique?

JM: We carry mostly previously-owned inventory, but our curation is what's makes us stand out. We carry punk, metal, rock, alternative, electronic, underground, and all the subgenres in between. We also support our local scene by carrying their titles.

AU: What is your mission statement as a business?

JM: We aim to provide record collectors whose tastes fall outside the "norm" access to hard-to-

find titles, pressings, and overlooked genres while promoting community, the sharing of outsider music knowledge, and being accessible. There's no record store snobbery. Matterhorn Records welcomes all shoppers, whether they be a new collector or well-seasoned and knowledgeable.

AU: Do you also do custom orders for vinyl?

JM: Not so much, but if you're looking for something let us know. We dig everywhere and have eyes out at all times for your holy grails. We also have many collector friends in the business; if we don't have it, we'll be able to point you in the right direction.

AU: Any special events planned in the near future?

JM: We are always selling at record shows, markets and concerts. We'll be at the 3rd Annual Punk Rock Market in Victoria December 21st.

AU: What kind of music do you play in the shop?

JM: Everything really, we'll even play music customers want to hear, as we don't have a listening station.

AU: Are there any local record labels you work with?

JM: We sell records for Early Onset Records, Kinda Cool Records, and Supreme Echo Records.

AU: Where is Matterhorn Records located?

JM: 245 East Broadway Vancouver B.C.

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WIZARD TATTOO

Interview by Mal Content

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

WT: I am Bram the Bard, the multi-instrumentalist behind Wizard Tattoo. Blending doom, stoner metal, and prog rock with storytelling and heavy riffs, I've created a musical universe of wizards, knife fights, and a dash of humour. Wizard Tattoo is for those who crave the strange and the epic.

AU: Give us a brief history Wizard Tattoo.

WT: I've been playing music since I was young, spending years in cover bands around Southern Indiana. After my son was born, I took a break to focus on family. Later, I started a blog promoting local bands and shows, but burnout led me to step away from music entirely. Eventually, I felt the pull to create again. I began writing songs and improving my guitar skills, which led to my first EP. The name Wizard Tattoo came after I got a wizard tattoo inspired by my love of LOTR. Since wizards and "Wizard" bands are common in the doom/stoner scene, I thought it would be funny to combine the two.

I released a self-titled EP in 2022, followed by *Fables of the Damned* in 2023. Initially, I handled everything myself, but for the July 2024 EP *Living Just for Dying*, I brought in my wife, Djinnifer, and longtime friend Fausto Aurelius for vocals. They returned for *One of These Knives*, released later in 2024.

AU: Describe your sound if possible.

WT: Wizard Tattoo's sound is intentionally eclectic. I write the music I want to hear, whether it's heavy stoner/doom riffs, strange country-western vibes, or even black metal— we've got an album in that vein coming next year. The common thread is storytelling, heavy riffs, and a willingness to explore different genres.

AU: What can you tell us about the new album?

WT: We released an LP on December 6th called *Living Just for Knife Fighting*. This album combines two EPs from earlier this year— *Living Just for Dying* and *One of These Knives*— plus three exclusive covers of songs by Helmet, Danzig, and Motörhead. It's a journey through Wizard Tattoo's evolving sound, blending doom, stoner metal, and prog rock with cinematic storytelling.

AU: Does the new album explore any particular themes or topics?

WT: The first half is a direct follow-up to *Fables of the Damned*, continuing the narrator's tale and

incorporating James Bond-inspired themes. The second half reimagines its fantasy characters as real, unhinged people in the real world. It's a mix of cinematic inspiration, fantasy, and dark humour.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

WT: I'm especially proud of the three covers: Helmet's "In the Meantime", Danzig's "Dirty Black Summer", and Motörhead's "Orgasmatron". Each brought unique challenges, and I'd love to do

more covers in the future based on how these are received.

AU: Any other bands from Indianapolis people should check out?

WT: My favourite Indianapolis bands with recent releases are Veilcaste, Mother of Graves, and Void King. My all-time favourite, Drude, isn't active anymore, but their incredible album is still on Bandcamp. Definitely worth checking out.

wizardtattooband.com



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Rare-Earth Magnet

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Amber: We are Rare-Earth Magnet! I don't know about infamous, but we really like to play cool psychedelic rock!

AU: Who's all in Rare-Earth Magnet and how did you get together?

Amber: Rare-Earth Magnet is composed of myself (Amber) and my husband Zacharie! He started it as an at-home recording project back in 2018 when he was living in the Yukon. I moved there in 2019, met Zach, and we became fast friends (we hooked up). We've been pretty inseparable since then. We also have a few friends who slide in and out of roles when we do live shows; it's hard to play drums, guitar, and keys at the same time. Our most recent iteration was with our buddies Mack Smith and Rob Jones. Both of whom play in multiple bands back up in the Yukon!

AU: How would you describe your sound to any readers that haven't heard you before?

Zach: We bounce anywhere from hard rock music to very synth heavy ballad-ish tunes.

AU: Zach, I know you're in multiple bands, what can you tell us about that?

Zach: Pre-covid, I was hopping around tons of bands up in Whitehorse. I found myself wanting to concentrate on my own music instead of being everyone's side guy.

Amber: The music scene is nuts up there.

AU: Your debut, self-titled album dropped in 2020 and you've released some singles over the years since then. Do you have a new album in production? Any new songs you're stoked on?

Zach: We have a surplus of songs in our archive that we will be releasing over the course of 2025.

Amber: Right now, we just released one of those archived tunes: "Shoreline"! It's only on Bandcamp right now, but it's a banger. We're super proud of it. Zach mixed and mastered it all at home on a reel-to-reel I may or may not have stolen from my



old job. I did ask if I could take it afterwards and they said yes... so it's technically not stealing.

Zach: Allegedly.

AU: Do you have any shows or tours coming up?

Zach: Here and there around the island. We have a show coming up December 28th at Dog Mountain Brewing in Port Alberni!

Amber: Love those guys. They also have a really sick open mic every other Wednesday. Shameless plug.

Zach: We're also in the process of auditioning a suitable drummer for our live stuff, now that we're settling here on the island.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

Zach: I work seven days a week! I don't have time to be nice or naughty.

Amber: That sounds pretty naughty to me.

Zach: My back pain is naughty.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Zach: Take care of yourself.

Amber: So deep. Also, thanks! We've been loving all the support we've received from folks who have come out to see us! Check us out on Spotify, Apple Music, and Bandcamp!

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KRYPTeia

Picking Bones

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Cameron Grobe is my name and savage rhythm guitar playing is my game.

AU: Give us a brief history of the band, who is in the band and what are you all about?

Founded in 2015. We lost and gained several members over the years with our current line up being myself (Cameron), our lead guitar player Nolan Bell, Luke Hill on vocals and Lyden Buttnor on drums. We've been working hard in the studio since 2023 making our best music to date. We're



all about creating earworm melodies and thunderous rhythms to show the world what Vancouver Island musicians are capable of.

AU: What's the music scene on Vancouver Island like?

The music scene is alive and well. It seems to fluctuate year to year but it certainly is not dead. We seem to be amidst a resurgence of punk, rock and metal bands on the island which is exciting to see and be a part of.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

We sound like if Korn, In Flames and Killswitch Engage made a test tube baby and that baby grew up to play 7 string guitars tuned to drop A.

AU: Have you released a single or album recently? What can we expect to hear?

We released our debut single "Chaos Imperium" in February of 2024 and have a new single slated to release January 3rd of 2025 called "Picking Bones". Chaos Imperium was a track that we recorded with our previous vocalist Jesse Sokolov which has a strong melodic

death metal sound to it with a Warhammer 40K theme. We also made a killer music video to go along with it on youtube. Our new single has a pretty vast sonic departure from Chaos with more of a modern MeloDeath+Thrashy vibe to it. We had an absolute blast making it.

AU: Does the new album explore any themes?

The new single "Picking Bones" has an overarching theme of death and revenge but our boy Luke is a total soft hearted poet and there's some undertones of something more morbidly romantic in there.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

Considering we're in the process of releasing singles at the moment, Every song we release we are all super hyped for. We pour our hearts and souls into these tracks and they're a reflection of the 4 of us individuals coming together with our influences and skills to make a masterpiece.

AU: Any plans for the holiday this year?

I'm just planning on taking some time off of work and music and soaking up all the good vibes and family time I can. My family is pretty spread out and with how busy life gets, we don't get to spend much time together these days.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

I have tried my best to be on the nice list this year but let's be honest, it's harder than it looks. I'm quite confident I'm getting coal in my stocking this year haha.

AU: Any other bands from Vancouver Island people should check out?

Absolutely. There's so many awesome bands on the Island. Antler, The Shindigs, Danger Box, SmashTV, Torrefy.

AU: What should we know about you that we don't already? Anything else to promote?

Yeah, We're currently working on an online merch store that will be coming as soon as possible, keep your eyes out on our socials for updates on that.

AU: Any plans to tour?

We have no concrete plans to tour for the time being. Our primary goal is to grow our music library and create our community of fans but we will go on tour when it feels right.

AU: Final words for our readers?

Whether you're already a fan or you're finding out about us for the first time, keep your eyes peeled. We won't be stopping until we're on top of the world and we sincerely hope that you will take this journey with us!

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H.Ä.L.T. I Want for Christmas is You!

By Billy Hopeless

Another year is at an end, my hopeless holiday readers. How can you most try to hibernate through the seasonal depression until January? I prefer to baste and embrace in the beauty and thus, I'm spending my Christmas with Vancouver post punk band H.Ä.L.T. fronted by the black leather tree topping Lonestar Sophia. As you all you all know Hopeless Always Loves Truly I urge you all to stay cool and chill out with H.Ä.L.T. until the winter's through. Goth bless you scary mental things!

Absolute Underground: Welcome to my Christmas column, let's start with the name on the package. H.Ä.L.T. Is that an acronym for Holly Angels Lights and Trees?

Sophie Lonestar: Robin explained it to me as a tool that is used in recovery to self-govern and not be self-destructive. Before acting out, check first if you are: Hungry. Angry. Lonely. Tired.

Sophie Lindgren: Playing and touring with a band can require dealing with all of the above!

AU: I see Stuffed Holidays Ate Lots of Turkey how fantastically festive. Now, how did H.Ä.L.T. S.T.A.R.T.? Tell us about the immaculate conception.

Robin Borawski: I started H.Ä.L.T. back in early 2019. I really just wanted to make music that made sense to me. I had been in various past music projects that never fully satisfied the ideas that I had in my head. After a few member hiccups and an annoying pandemic, H.Ä.L.T. found the proper lineup. It's never been better!

Lonestar: I came on writing lyrics and singing after Larissa (the previous singer) moved to Portland. We went right into writing all new songs and an emphasis on the dystopia we are currently living in. I was so beyond stoked to become bandmates with like-minded people, it comes very naturally for us to pull content from the things that inspire us.

AU: Dystopia in a marshmallow world I guess

the doctor is real in here's my 5 cents Lucy, lets get to the symptoms! On your debut S/T album you have a song entitled "Cyanopsia" which is a medical term for the condition of seeing everything blue after the removal of a cataract. Has anyone in your band or that you know ever had a truly blue Christmas due to this occurrence and where do you get your song subjects from?

RB: Not many people know this, but at the time, the song "Blue (Da Ba Dee)" by Eiffel 65 would get stuck in my head at least once a day. I felt like I was living in a blue world, so "Cyanopsia" sort of expressed itself.

Lindgren: Our songs for our new album address such classic subjects as death, religion, addiction, and the apocalypse.

AU: And a partridge in a pear tree! Now grab a hold of my magic candy cane. We're going to go past-to-the present. When I first heard you angels on high, I was instantly reminded in an odd way of the '80s-'90s Toronto band National Velvet. You really should cover their song "68 Hours" by my Satanic request. What artists past and present do you find influence and inspiration from?

RB: There aren't many present bands that I find influential these days— maybe I'm looking in all the wrong places. Bands that have stuck are Joy Division, New Order, The Cure, Front 242, Vomito Negro, (early) Cocteau Twins, The Hacker, (early) Boris Dzanek, Depeche Mode, Tricky, PiL.

Tasha Gobeil: The Cure, Joy Division, Belgrado, Rikk Agnew, Christian Death.

Lonestar: Siouxsie, Sisters of Mercy, Xmal Deutschland, The Cure (who doesn't though?!) She Past Away, Vice Squad, Motörhead, Big Mama Thornton, Rozz Williams, Stiv Bators... The list

goes on and on.

Lindgren: My inspirations for H.Ä.L.T. are also rooted in the past. I'm a big fan of the classic '80s goth sound – The Danse Society and Skeletal Family in addition to bands mentioned above. I'm also inspired by synthpop like Soft Cell and Tears for Fears.

AU: Speaking of the past in our last issue I asked Christo from the Sisters of Mercy to finish the following sentence: I'm so goth that _____. But alas he couldn't as his vampire was adamant that they weren't a goth band. Now you are a self-proclaimed traditional goth band so have a go at it, won't you?

Lonestar: I suppose we are SO goth we celebrate the darkest, longest night of the year (winter solstice) fuck Christmas, haha. We never meant to proclaim ourselves as any genre, as finding one that everyone can agree on is always difficult. There are far too many genres nowadays!

AU: Quoting the band's Bandcamp page, "H.Ä.L.T. are a traditional goth/post punk band."

RB: I work 12-hour graveyard shifts. It's been over 3.5 years now, so I'm technically a vampire.

AU: I've been doing the same for seven years; guess its in our blood. How rude of me not to ask you to

introduce the band. Please name each member of the band, what they play, and which toy from the island of misfit toys best represents them and why.

RB: Robin Borawski – bass. I'm probably more like Brucie from *The Hilarious House of Frightenstein*.

TG: Tasha Gobeil – drums and vocals.

Lonestar: Sophie Lonestar – vocals and Lyrics. I would probably identify as any Muppet-type creature... perhaps one of those Fireys from the *Labyrinth*... that's not a toy though. Would the island of misfit toys have room for a busted-up raccoon stuffie?

Lindgren: Sophie Lindgren – synthesizers and electronic drum pad.

AU: Come on now, none of you chose a boat that can't stay a float, a train with square wheels, a Charlie in the box or the little red head doll that seems normal on the outside but we're all sure has issues. Oh, shit the clocks striking midnight; let's get to the future and New Year's revolutions. You've got a new album in the works for 2025, please tell me all about it, kind spirits.

booked to record our new LP in March 2025. We plan on having the record pressed and released soon after.

Lonestar: We also have a music video out for a new track titled "Forever Dead" – shot by Dark Horse Photo (@the_dark_horse_snaps) and Phaelen Kuehne (@phaelenkuehne.photo) We would love to do more tours next year as well!

TG: I'm looking forward to celebrating the newest album with the newest lineup. It's been a long time coming and we are really happy with how well some of the tracks came to fruition. (Any labels want to lend us a hand with production/distribution? You can find us at haltforhalt@gmail.com – a little shameless self promotion never hurt!)

AU: Maybe Santa could help produce and distribute your album, the guy really only works one season. Well, cant wait till it's in the can but how about all the tomorrow's parties? Got any upcoming live events for the sugar plums to dance to?

Lonestar: We have a few shows coming up, including NYE at the Wise Hall as well as at Verboden Fest in the spring! The best place to follow what we're up to is our Instagram.

AU: Ah, the Wise Hall in the far East Van. I knew three dudes I'd often meet there that were always a gold hook up for frankincense and myrrh. Since we're Wassailing this way, every band I've ever been in has had an after-practice decompression chamber. Where do you bats hang after a hard night's flight?

RB: Decompress? Wouldn't that be nice.

Lonestar: Grab a joint and marg in the alley. My three cats get upset if they aren't invited to said alley party (as they are true creatures of the night) so to avoid getting puked on in my sleep, I scurry home! So summed up: alley dwellers.

Lindgren: Wherever the drinks are!

TG: A glass of wine and a fire in my yard is where you will find me most nights after jam. Come hang sometime!

AU: Well, I wish you and all my readers a Hopeless holiday season. Give our readers your yuletide message and tell them why H.Ä.L.T. records and T-shirts available on your Bandcamp page are the perfect gift to give this season.

RB: "There's no fate, but what we make for ourselves." Most of our merch is sold out, but we have a couple H.Ä.L.T. LPs left!

Lonestar: Remember, Krampus will spank you and stick you in a sack, so be extra bad cause that guy sounds like fun. Hope everyone's holiday season is painless and y'all can enjoy the silence that is winter. Our last run of T-shirts went too quick! Have a new batch coming in hot!

TG: Records... come get summmmm. People of Earth: Feel free to message us and let us know what you wanna see on our merch table!

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WONK UNIT

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most known for?

Alex Wonk: You are talking to Alex "Daddy" Wonk. What am I known for? Wonk Unit, Wonkfest? The Flying Medallions, being a skateboarder, being sober, being friendly, I dunno, being a dad? Being silly with Pwosion? Being a plasterer? Being very proactive in the UK DIY scene?

Vez: I'm best known for being Wonk's keyboard player, and having green hair.

Ryan: I'm Ryan, I'm designated driver and I play guitar too.

AU: Who's all in Wonk Unit? How did you meet?

AW: So, there's myself whose life gets chronicled by the band, long-term bass playing sidekick Pwosion, Vezzy who I plucked from a queue at a festival and bullied into playing keys for us that eve. Max who grows as a drummer every year for fear of upsetting me and guitarist Ryan who began life as our driver and rescuer before I realized I was sitting on a musical goldmine of talent and insanity and managed to nab him before the rest of the world caught up with his worth.

Vez: I actually met Alex for the first time as a fan in 2017, and it wasn't until June 2018 that he got me properly up on stage, crying from nerves at the Melkweg in Amsterdam. I had never been in a band before joining Wonk Unit and had zero ambition to make music beyond playing piano at home. How things change!

Ryan: I rescued them from a broken van in Germany, and we've been working together ever since.

AU: I know Wonk Unit's origins are rooted in your experience in rehab 25 years ago, and that a lot of your songs are from your "addiction journals" that you wrote while you were in recovery. What can you tell us about

that? How do you feel at this time in your life and how has Wonk Unit aided your healing?

AW: So, Wonk is pretty much a musical diary of my life, from those early days of recovery, to doomed relationships, to breaking my back on building sites, to becoming a parent. Songwriting and poetry (where the songs originate) has always helped me process my emotions, to exorcise those demons. Sharing in public is like group therapy, I guess. Right now, after a very difficult five years, I'm happy to say I've weathered the storm and am feeling pretty blessed.

AU: Your ninth album, Good Good Glad To Hear It will be out December 6th. Which songs are you particularly stoked on?

AW: All of the songs are important to me; they wouldn't have made the record otherwise. "Luxury Flats" appeared by magic at a late stage in the recording process and is killing it live at gigs. I like the journey the record takes you on. I think it's a piece of work that comes across best listened to in its entirety.

Ryan: My "most stoked" song changes every week; this is the first full-length Wonk unit record that I've played on.

AU: What was the production like? Did you find yourselves up against any hurdles?

AW: Production was groundbreaking for us. I live 250 miles away from the rest of the band, so we ended up doing a lot of stuff remotely. I have zero recording equipment but I had an idea to record a single song entirely using just my cell phone, just to see what our long-term producer Andy Brook was capable of. It worked so well that over half the vocals and a large percentage of guitars were recorded this way using a click track from YouTube. I've come to realize over the years that it's all about the take rather than any slick production that makes a record listenable. Obviously, Andy's production is slick as fuck though.

Ryan: I remember one morning Alex calling me saying we needed guitar finished for a song that morning, so there's a track or two that I recorded in my living room, in my pajamas with a litre off coffee next to me!

AU: What's your songwriting process? Lyrics or music first? Who's usually involved?

AW: Pain first, then poetry, then a lightning bolt and the urge to shape that poem over music.

Vez: Lyrics first every time! I wrote two songs for our previous album Uncle Daddy, but haven't written for our new record as I've been working on my personal project Xray Vez. Alex is the only



person I have— and would— write with, as we write in quite a similar way.

AU: You've released some music videos through the Pirates Press YouTube channel, with "Rapidly Declining Dignity" capturing the spirit of touring and performing as a punk band, and "Overwhelmed" featuring heartwarming home movies of you spending time with your daughter. What can you tell us about these videos?

PIRATES PRESS

AW: The "Rapidly" video was shot at Handfest (Random Hand's festival at The Dome in London). A nice little nod to the UK DIY scene. The "Overwhelmed" video is special on many levels. Obviously, it's a nice little thing for us as parents showing the early years of Aubrey's life and secondly, it was made by Adam Stone who was our drummer on MUFFY and Wonk Unit Saved My Life. I love Adam beyond measure. He is a truly beautiful person and I'm so proud of him.

Ryan: The morning we shot "Rapidly Declining Dignity" I started the morning in Vienna, flew back to London, got straight on the bus, got to our rehearsal room, grabbed a guitar, then we went straight in to cameras rolling!

AU: Any plans for the holidays this year?

Vez: We're having a big Wonk X-Mas party on the 22nd of December in London, hosted by our friends at Signature Brew. There will be a raffle and I have made some Pwosion-based artwork for the lucky winners.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

AW: I'm always extremely both.

Vez: I'm always nice! Just don't touch my keyboard.

Ryan: I'm too nice!

AU: Anything else you'd like to add?

AW: I think everyone should go out every morning and piss on the newspapers that spread such division and hatred to the gullible masses before they make the shelves. People won't buy piss-soaked bullshit.

AU: Famous last words?

AW: Treat others how you wanna be treated yourself.

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Contra Code

Interview by Aeryn Shrapnel

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous or infamous for?

Tim: My name is Tim, I play bass in Contra Code. I've always considered myself a guitar player. It took a while to convince myself that I'm more of a bass player now. I do get to write some guitar in Contra Code, I'm happy I just have to play bass.

AU: Can you give us a brief history of the band? How did you meet and what are you about?

Tim: The band formed over a decade ago. It was started by Dave and Branden in their early days. Paul joined the band a few years after and they released *Sick Rad*. I ended up becoming a member of the band unintentionally. Long story short... their bassist got deported and I got dragged out by Branden for a random jam. I joined the day after. The past 11 years I have been with Contra Code. It has been the most free group I've had the privilege to play music with. One of the biggest

things that has made it the most enjoyable is that it has been "ego free." We take it seriously, but not too seriously if that makes sense? We write fun, fast, punk and it's been a total blast to write with these boys.

AU: Your latest release dropped September 2023. I know production took a couple years over covid lock-down; can you tell us about that? What were some of your biggest barriers?

Tim: Yes, the album took a while to record, but honestly, I think the process worked out great! Stu McKillop was open to recording us at his home studio. We recorded drums at Rain City Recorders. I think it took over a year to get all the recordings done and we definitely took our time with the mixing and mastering process. Overall, it ended up coming together the best way we could have asked for.



Kinda Cool Records played a huge role in making this album happen. We've toured and played a ton of shows with the guys from You Big Idiot. Shafer and Steve have been amazing from the start.

AU: Any favourite tracks?

Tim: Personally, I love "Backyard

Slaps". It was the last song to get added to the album before we went into the studio. When Paul recorded his vocals in the studio, it was the

first time I heard it. The lyrics brought me back to when I was an Ontario teen... the Warped tours and band fests.

AU: Who or what inspired you most when you wrote this album?

Tim: We had started material for *Friday Jr* just after we released *Wasted Already*. I feel finishing this album together was like breaking down a wall that we needed to overcome. All of us had a lot of personal things we needed to deal with between the release of *Wasted Already* and *Friday Jr*. All of us supported each other through the years and stayed tight. There was a point in time when I had doubted that we wouldn't finish the album, but everything came together at the right time and it was a lot of fun.

AU: Are you working on any new music at the moment?

Tim: Yes, we're definitely working on new music.

AU: Any plans for the holidays this year?

Tim: Staying local. Working on new material for Contra Code.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

Tim: I try my best to be nice, haha.

AU: What's the best local band deserving of more recognition of 2024?

Tim: Precursor is definitely one that stands out for recent local bands. Great to see those guys still putting out dope music. All of them are well-respected within Vancouver's scene. Any music that comes out from local bands is always awesome to hear. It's a challenging scene in Vancouver for all genres of music. The local

KINDA COOL RECORDS



fans that come out to support bands/artists in Vancouver is what should be recognized more.

AU: Anything else to promote?

Tim: The Kinda Cool Records family 100%!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

Tim: Raise that glass... the best is yet to come.

Contra Code is on all the streaming platforms.

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Holiday Party Time – Without the Sugar Crash

By Lily Fawn

It's all fun and games until one too many Rum and Eggnogs has you caught in a vicious sugar cycle. The holidays can be stressful, and stress feeds on sugar. No wonder they go so well together. (Stress + sugar = the perfect crime.) I doubt I am the only one who has found themselves lying in bed cradling a box of leftover holiday chocolates as though I am in a scene from a vintage Hollywood movie; the glamorous actress, in her luxury loungewear, crying over a box of bonbons as she pops one after another into her mouth while cursing the names of her lovers. I always enjoy those scenes because they are quite an effective solution to the emotional stress, sadness, fatigue, anxiety, and depression

that many of us experience after a holiday full of booze, goodies, and family. I call it my self-medicating crying fit! I am not proud of this behaviour, but here's why it works. Every rumball you consume will provide about 15 minutes of relief from the sugar-crashing symptoms your body is trying to warn you about. Then you eat another bliss ball, but this temporary relief is really not an ideal approach. So, if you are looking for more helpful recommendations to manage your post-holiday sugar crash, keep reading.

When a sugar crash happens, your glucose drops, and your body will not be happy. It will try to communicate with symptoms like hunger, irritability, sadness, headaches, fatigue, anxiety, and difficulty concentrating. Yes, it is true that your body needs sugar to function, but don't worry... YOU LIKELY GET PLENTY, even when you are on your best "sugar-free" diet. Sugars are found in fruits, veggies, carbs, and dairy. There is sugar in almost everything, and the goal is to keep the sugar in your body at the perfect and consistent level. Eating too much sugar causes insulin to spike, which forces your body into

high gear, making it work extra hard to produce insulin quickly enough to keep up. What can you do during a crash? Try eating protein (nuts) or a healthy simple carbohydrate, such as an apple or banana, which will absorb quickly into your bloodstream. Eat smaller balanced meals (a mix of protein, fibre, carbohydrates, and fat) and several healthy snacks throughout the day. Avoid these big NO-NO's: caffeine, alcohol, bagels/pastry, soda pop. If you just can't give up alcohol or sweets over the holidays, eat your small portion of sweet treats after a meal. It really helps to have fibre and protein along with sugar because it slows down the metabolism of the sugars. Do not eat refined sugar on an empty stomach. My super bad habit is to wake up in the morning and head straight for the leftover Christmas goodies to find a favourite piece of fudge for breakfast to accompany my booze-spiked coffee. THAT IS THE WORST. It's also not good to have coffee (caffeine) first thing

on an empty stomach! Hope this helps your recovery from the holidays and gives you a great jumping-off point for your 2025 healthy body! I have put together a list of cocktail creations that are not going to send you into a tailspin this season. Give them a try. They contain more fibre and herbs that will help balance your insulin.

Apple Pie Bourbon Martini

2 oz - Earth's Herbal Hot Apple Pie Tea, steeped and cooled

1/2 oz - Grand Marnier

1 oz of Makers Mark Bourbon

1 oz of fresh pressed Apple Cider

Twis tan orange peel over the empty martini glass then rim the glass with an orange slice and dip in sugar. (I lightly grated some orange peel into the sugar to get a nice mixture of both orange and sugar for the rim of the glass) Add your Tea, Grand Marnier, Bourbon and Apple Cider. Stir lightly and garnish with a cinnamon stick.

Easy Iced Apple Cranberry Holiday Spice Fizz

3 Parts Organic Apple Cider

2 Parts Lily's Holiday Spice Tea, brewed

Bring to a light simmer and then turn off heat. Let steep for 20 minutes or until it cools, then strain and refrigerate until needed.

2 Parts fresh soda water

1 Part pure cranberry juice

Garnish with cinnamon sticks and fresh apple slices. VOILA! Serve over ice. Add 2oz of Phillips Brewery Stump Gin to each 8oz cocktail glass

Holiday Spice Martini

Based on a 6 oz cocktail glass

Prepare 3 tsp of Earth's Herbal Holiday Spice tea in 250 ml of water. Bring to a light simmer and then turn off heat. Let steep for 20 minutes or until it cools, then strain and refrigerate until party time.

Preparing your glassware: Twist 2 orange peel

HERBAL WITCH

ribbons over the martini glass and add a dash of Peychaud's Bitters (optional - if you have it). Swirl the glass around so a light coating of the bitters and orange essence lines the vessel. Rim the martini glasses with fresh squeezed lemon slices and dip in sugar. Place the glassware in the freezer until it is time to serve to your guests.

When you are ready to make the cocktails, mix:

2 oz of Grand Marnier Liqueur,

1 oz Brandy

3 oz the cold Holiday Spice Tea

Muddle with 1 sugar cube and then shake with ice (use a martini shaker). Garnish with candied ginger, frozen cranberries and a sprig of rosemary.

Hot Apple Pie Hot Toddy

Dad's famous trick to put the kids to sleep! I love you, Dad.

1 tsp of Hot Apple Pie Tea Blend

1 cup of boiled water

Steep 5 min, strain.

1 oz bourbon

1 Tbsp of un-pasteurized honey

2 tsp of lemon juice

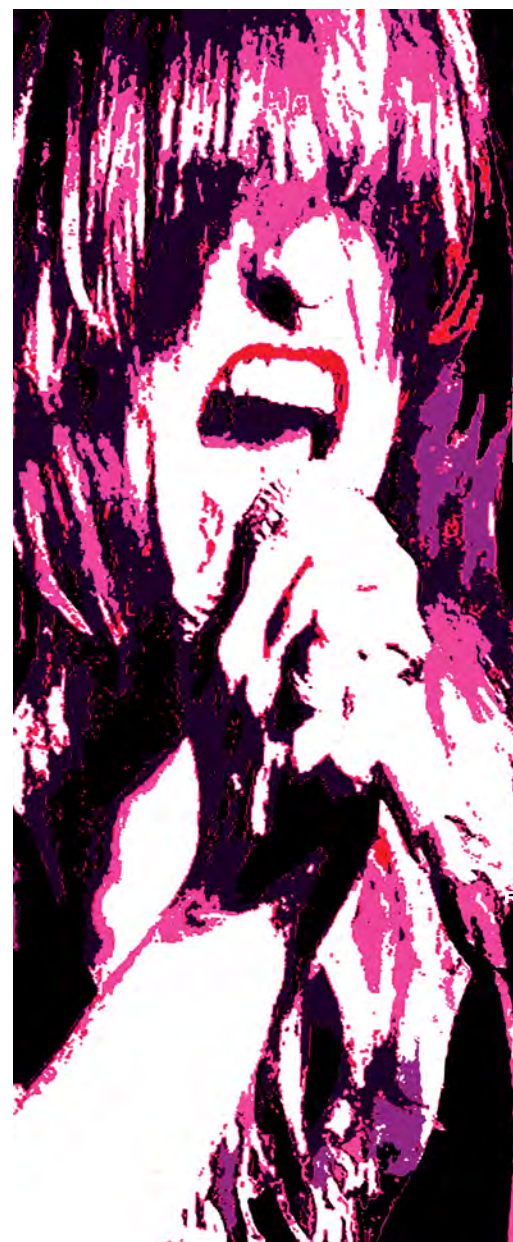
1 1/2 tsp of butter sprinkle with cinnamon

Serve HOT HOT HOT!!! A warm mug of toddy always seems to banish the winter blues, calm the cough and put you right to sleep.

I would like to wish you a wonderful and relaxing holiday filled with friends, family, delicious food and good cheer. With the New Year just around the corner, I hope you are as excited as I am. May your 2025 be a rewarding and productive.

"The year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us." - Hal Borland

earthsherbal.com

PUNK CANADA VOL. 3

AUDIO VISCERAL
CITIZEN RAGE
FOREVER DEAD!
HELLBENT
THE HOCKEY MOMS
THE NO GOES
OLD HABITS
PEROXIDE
THE POOR CHOICES
RUSSIAN TIM AND PAVEL BURES
SAGO
STAND AGAINST FEAR
SUPERCAR
TADOMA
VULGAR DELI
YER MUM

- VULGAR DELI (MONTREAL)
covers Genetic Control
- THE NO GOES (SASKATOON)
covers Pointed Sticks
- CITIZEN RAGE (CALGARY)
covers Beyond Possession
- YER MUM (WINNIPEG)
covers Mung
- SUPERCAR (CHARLOTTETOWN)
covers The Stand GT
- PEROXIDE (QUEBEC CITY)
covers Amnésie
- SAGO (TORONTO)
covers Kittens
- AUDIO VISCERAL (VANKLEEK HILL)
covers The Diodes
- HOCKEY MOMS (LETHBRIDGE)
covers Knucklehead
- FOREVER DEAD! (THUNDER BAY)
covers Headcramp
- RUSSIAN TIM & PAVEL BURES (VANCOUVER)
covers DBS
- THE POOR CHOICES (VICTORIA)
covers The 'B' Girls
- HELLBENT (HAMILTON)
covers Random Killing
- STAND AGAINST FEAR (GUELPH)
covers Sudden Impact
- OLD HABITS (MONCTON)
covers The Monoxides
- TADOMA (HUMBOLDT)
covers Stretch Marks

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Don Denton

Interview by John Carlow

If you look around Vancouver Island punk/ metal gigs are you're likely to see Don Denton close to the pit, dodging boots. Well known to the scene, Don's been shooting many years and has some engaging stories to tell. You might have seen one of his gallery shows, taken one of his classes, or have looked through one of his books. You probably don't realize you're standing beside a guy who's had a 40-plus year career as a pro photographer/photo editor working for newspapers and magazines across Canada as well as a couple of years in Europe covering news, sports, people.

Absolute Underground: When did you start showing an interest in photography?

Don Denton: I was an avid reader of the Vancouver Sun from an early age and over time became more and more interested in the images printed in the paper.

AU: Early subjects of interest?

DD: Any photograph that caught my eye. I do remember an extended photo essay on the seamier side of Granville Street by Glenn Baglo. I was amazed that someone could get those images under those tough conditions.

Outside of music I currently shoot streetscapes, mainly urban. I'm very interested in the idea of place and how it shapes who we are. I do like to take portraits. Portraiture is a visual challenge. I loved doing food photography when I worked for the magazines but not much opportunity for that right now.

AU: Training?

DD: I took a two-semester photo class at Cariboo College (now Thompson Rivers University) as part of a one-year media (radio/TV/newspaper) program. That and a few workshops were my only formal training. Mike Rimmer, a newspaper photographer taught those courses and was my first mentor/teacher as was my school buddy Nick Didlick, now a Sony Camera Ambassador, who was a photography buff in high school.

AU: Film equipment you shot on and when did you switch to digital?

DD: I started out with a Konica SLR film camera, switched over to Nikon film cameras shortly after my first newspaper staff position and as I started photographing bands/music. I continue to use Nikon gear, all digital now although still have one Nikon film body. I shoot available light 95% of the time but do usually carry a small off camera flash for those times when extra light is needed. Play around with Instax, Holga's etc.

I did not personally switch to digital until about 2002. I was very familiar with digital though as I was working through the '90s at the Calgary Herald (as Assistant Photo Editor) where we were one of the first adopters of digital gear. I did actually use one of the first digital Nikons in 1994 to cover the Commonwealth Games in Victoria.

AU: How did your interest in music photography develop?

DD: I'd always been interested in music and started bringing my camera to a few shows. I didn't know what I was doing and so have some terrible images of AC/DC, Alice Cooper, and others. My first foray into actually photographing bands with a purpose was what was arguably the first punk show in Vancouver- The Furies and The Dishrags (Dee Dee and the Dishrags as they

were originally called) at Vancouver's Japanese Hall. I called up Tom Harrison at the Georgia Straight and asked if he was interested in using the photos and thankfully he was. Tom was a huge supporter of the early Vancouver punk scene and of my photography when nobody else was.

AU: Who were some of the earliest bands you shot?

DD: As mentioned above, The Furies, The Dishrags. I photographed the first performance of The Skulls

who later morphed into two of Vancouver's most famous punk bands, DOA and The Subhumans. Other Vancouver bands included The Pointed Sticks, Tim Ray & AV, Victoria Pork and others. I was also fortunate to photograph the first visiting punk bands like The Avengers, The Lewd and a couple of the famous punk bands of the time such as The Clash and Ramones.

AU: Memorable portraits?

DD: A favourite portrait is Colin Griffiths, then with The Pointed Sticks, holding a drumhead with a photo of some 1950s teens on it and holding out a can of Dance Wax.

There was Joey Ramone in his hotel room on Robson Street in Vancouver. The image was to accompany a feature by John Mackie for the Georgia Straight. Joey was sitting on his bed, stubby beer bottle in hand, and white socks on the floor. I just wished I'd taken way more. I was careful of my film in those days and now wished I hadn't been so stingy.

Lots of stories there but if you need it, one standout from my European days; I was walking back to my Brussels apartment one night from an evening out with friends. I was passing one government building where European leaders had been meeting. I saw Margaret Thatcher, then British Prime Minister, heading to her limo after meetings (I had photographed her with other leaders at a very short press-distanced conference earlier that day). As I walked by, a waiting reporter shouted a question at her. She obviously didn't like it as she stormed over to him and had a very heated conversation for about five minutes. I had walked over and was standing next to him, luckily, I had a camera with me and photographed the British PM standing two feet away from me. That would never happen today with security and PR reps running politicians' lives.

AU: Best live gig story?

DD: Best? Scariest for sure. The Clash at the Commodore in Vancouver (January 31st, '79- First North American show). Tables with folding legs had been set up against the stage as a barrier. The crowd surged forward causing the table legs to fold as those of us at the front were crushed into the stage. I had a young woman pinned under me and it was all I could do to keep from being pushed forward and crushing her (and me). Luckily, someone yelling on stage got the crowd to ease back and all was okay.

AU: Whose work do you admire or follow?

DD: Early on (and still) I admired the work of Robert Frank, Don McCullin, and Annie Leibovitz (the early black and white work for Rolling Stone). Currently, the list is too large to write down. I'm always in awe of the work of colleagues and other Canadian music photographers, the legendary Bev Davies, Bob Hanham, Cat Ashbee, etc. We have access to so many photographers now via the internet versus the old days of just magazines and books, I end up looking at so much work. I tend to read more about photography these days, writers like David Company, Geoff Dyer, Rebecca Bengal.

AU: Timeline of your journey with photography?

DD: 1973/74 First shooting with a point and shoot

1975 Graduated

'76/'77 Media Program, Cariboo College

February '77 Full-time Photographer at Kamloops

Daily Sentinel while still at college

Summer '77 to January '80 Freelance music photographer, covered start of Vancouver punk

February '80 Photographer Kamloops News

June '81 Photographer Edmonton Sun

May '82 Chief Photographer, Kamloops News

August '84 Photo Desk Editor, Vancouver Sun

May 1986 Photographer/Editor, Reuter News Pictures - Brussels Belgium

March '88 Photo Desk Editor, Vancouver Sun

August '89 Assistant Photo Editor, Calgary Herald

Mid-'90s Teaching at Mount Royal College, now Mount Royal University, in Calgary

May 2003 Photographer/Photo Supervisor, Black Press newspapers and magazines. Retire September 2023

I'm always freelancing. Always have multiple personal projects on the go. From roughly 1994-2004 photographed Canadian writers. The Banff Centre Press published two books of that work, 50 portraits in each.

The past 7-8 years I've SLOWLY been working on a history of BC photographers, collecting interviews (about 70 so far) as well as files (over a hundred), books and ephemera.

Have done a few group gallery shows in Calgary, group and solo shows in Victoria/ Vancouver and a solo show in New York of the early Vancouver punk images in 2023.

AU: The road ahead?

DD: Keep photographing until, as the saying (slightly altered) goes, they pry the camera from my dead, frozen fingers. Starting up a small zine publishing business focussing on photography and small local culture.

AU: Advice/words of wisdom?

SHOOT TO KILL



DD: Just get out there and do it, whatever it is you want to do. Do it for yourself, worry about a market later. Don't wait, don't procrastinate, don't feel you have to be better or more original. That will come if you're out there creating the work. I'd also advise keeping some sort of text records if you're creating visual work. Memories fade WAY quicker than you can imagine and a diary/journal/ notes will be very useful down the road. Trust me, I wish I'd done it. Finally treat your archive with respect and keep it organized. Your life will be much easier.

dondenton.ca



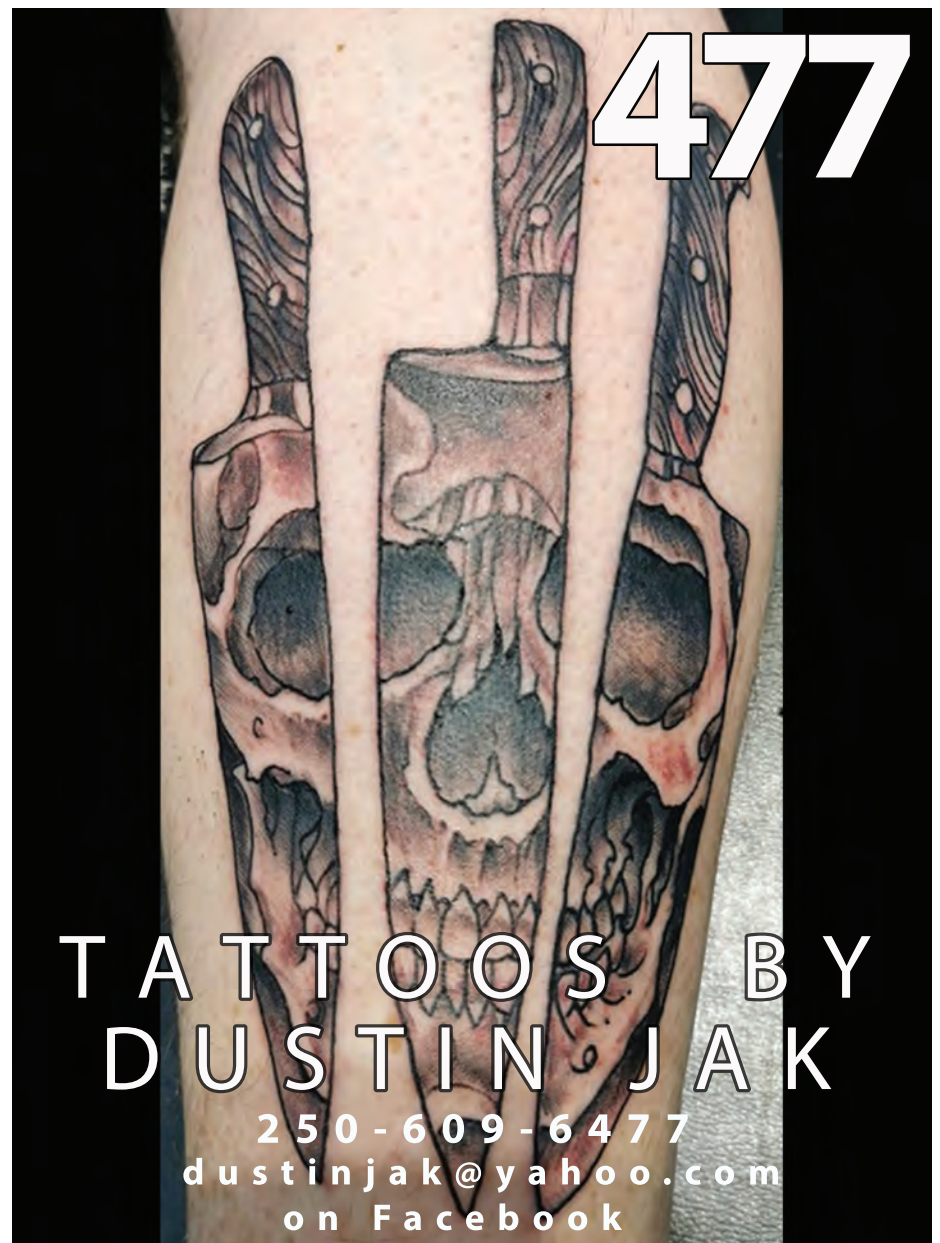


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TATTOOS BY DUSTIN JAK

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Glitter Glue

Calgary Punk Genre-Benders

Interview by Laurie Storrie

Absolute Underground: Who am I talking to and what is your role in the band?

Jawrjuh: My name is Jawrjuh, and I get to be the lead singer, with me is Dallas on guitar, and Harvey on Bass.

AU: Can you give us a brief history of the band?

Dallas: I wasn't actually there at the very beginning. Eli (Cop Surgery, Mademoiselle), Jawrjuh (Cop Surgery), and I were in a different band together that was starting to seriously fizzle out and a little while after they had started Glitter Glue with Tyrone (The Cowtown Collection), I got the invite to join on bass. After we started playing live, I ended up needing to miss a couple shows because of Uni or work stuff, I can't really remember what, and we asked Harvey (The Corey Hotline) to cover me on bass. His vibes meshed so well with everyone else that we decided I'd move over to second guitar so we could keep him around.

AU: A Glitter Glue set bounces between riot grrrl, emo, and skate punk, then even touches on hardcore and funk. What's your writing process like?

Jawrjuh: Thanks for noticing! We each have a pretty diverse background when it comes to both experience and taste in music. We also can kinda look like we belong in different acts. When writing new material (at least from my

perspective), someone will come in with a lil slice of something that they think would make a juicy track. Then everyone else will get like, the actual instrument parts down and jam out till things start to firm up and from there I bring in some lyrics I have squirreled away in my never-ending notes app. Eli and I both contribute to lyrics in a very back and forth motion like a mad libs see-saw. We like to let the song tell you what it wants to be, rather than try and force a certain sound



out. It helps that we are all big fans of each other, I certainly think I scored big, so there is a lot of trust and support between us. The whole process is very much a team effort.

AU: What's on the radio in the van on the way to the gig, and what's on during the way home?

Dallas: We're strong believers in Driver's Privilege when it comes to what's on the radio, which if we're all piling into one vehicle tends to mean it's whatever Jawrjuh wants to hear. Thankfully Jawrjuh is a benevolent god who is willing to play to their audience, though given all of our varied personal tastes a happy middle ground can be anything from classic punk or alternative, warped

tour emo, or Chappell Roan, depending on the mood that day. For my part, I'm always trying to make my bandmates listen to more goth shit.

AU: There's an undeniable sense of politics to your music. What drives you?

Dallas: Frankly, I don't understand how anyone can be at all observant of the world around them and not find themselves driven to want change. We're also a band whose members represent a range of marginalized identities, including gender, sexuality, class, race, and ability. We all have personal experiences of oppression, and we have our worries and fears and anxieties about the safety of ourselves and those we care about and of every other person struggling with a boot on their neck. Siphoning some of that anger and fear and sadness into music is, for me at least, a way to keep it from getting overwhelming.

AU: Despite having such strong morals, the whole band is always smiling. How do you find the balance between love and rage?

Jawrjuh: Rage and love? Is that a Green Day reference? I'm choosing to believe it is. We are all genuinely good friends and were before we started making music together, so for me it is impossible not to grin. Even when it's a song like "It's Not You" that I wrote as a place to let out my fury for the men who have treated me like shit, I get to do it with people I love and that's fucking fantastic. What a gift to be supported in your anger. I also think you owe it to the people who came out to see you to try to have a great time so they feel permission to do that too.

UNDER THE OUTHOUSE

AU: What is it about Calgary that produces so many great punk bands?

Jawrjuh: Oh boy, I think there are so many things. Calgary is a small town, no matter how big the population gets. There is a community feeling within the scene here which gives artists the courage to step on stage and just try something.

Harvey: Calgary is a regressively conservative place that's socially and economically hostile to the marginalized people who live here. But it's also home to many good and creative people, and we've responded to these systemic

threats by forming an interdependent arts community whose emphasis on mutual support stands as an affront to capitalist hyper-individualism. In this environment, punk shows become more than just concerts; they are communions and I think that's reflected in the bands we produce.

AU: What's next for Glitter Glue?

Jawrjuh: We're about to head into a writing and recording hibernation which we are all really excited for. I'll be supplementing my onstage time by harassing karaoke nights all across town, so locals be ware.

AU: Finally, how do readers find you online?

Harvey: Our music is on all streaming platforms, and readers can find show announcements and general hijinks by following us on Instagram.

[@glittergluemusic](https://www.instagram.com/glittergluemusic)



RIPCORDZ TOUR TIPS

As we've been driving back and forth across Canada for more than three decades, we've come up with some guidelines that help us on the road. Figured we'd share.

They're tips, not rules. Everyone has their own way of touring, but some of these may help younger bands on their way.

PART ELEVEN

TOUR TIP NUMBER 61



SHOWER/BATHE WHEREVER YOU CAN WHENEVER YOU CAN

You never know when you'll
get another chance.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 62



ARRANGE MERCH BY SIZE, NOT DESIGN

It's easier to find a design in a size pile
than a size in a design pile.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 63



THERE WILL BE DUST. SO MUCH DUST.

Put those leftover COVID masks
to good use.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 64



DROP BY THE LOCAL RECORD STORES

Many will take an album or two to sell.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 65



DON'T FINISH WITH A COVER SONG

Make your own music
the star of the show.

TOUR TIP NUMBER 66



WATCH THE CROWD AS THE CROWD WATCHES YOU

The pit will vote
which are your best songs.

Find more tips and other stuff on our facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/ripcordzpunk>
and instagram, <https://www.instagram.com/ripcordz.punk>



THE GETMINES

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous and or infamous for?

Cliff Thiessen here! Victoria native, Vancouver (well, New West) resident, and playing/played in the following bands: The Getmines, Chũnk, We Hunt Buffalo, Man The Wolf. Talking The Getmines today! In Particular our first Vinyl pressing and official album release show February 7th, 2025 at the Waldorf in Vancouver!

AU: Give us a brief history of the band.

Emerging from the basements and garages of Vancouver (British Columbia) in late 2013, we are heavy rock act The Getmines and we are no strangers to performing in gritty venues packed with tempestuous crowds. Known for our sizzling stage shows and reputation for throwing gasoline on any size of party, the vetted trio is comprised of guitarist/vocalist Dave Barrqueiro, bassist/vocalist Cliff Thiessen and drummer Mike "LeShitski" Kott

AU: What's the music scene in Vancouver like?

The last couple years has really done well for Vancouver. People are coming out of hiding a little more and shows have been great. That being said, we've been playing out of town a lot lately and I gotta say, the out of town crowds are wicked fun!

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible.

Hard Rock with some Punk aspects, it hits hard, makes you dance and rock out. But if you dive into the lyrics you'll find some deeper meanings and story exploration.

AU: Are you putting out a new album anytime in the near future?

Glad you asked! We have just pressed our first Vinyl album! It is called "Gold & Silver", is made up of 13 tracks and if I may so myself, it effin slaps. There is even a secret song on the physical copy that you can't find online yet... To show you how much we like it, our live set has 11 of the songs on the list. February 7th we are playing the Waldorf in Vancouver to celebrate!

AU: Does the album explore any themes or topics?

While themes and topics don't follow throughout the album, it is a good representation of how The Getmines are evolving. Pushing ourselves to write better songs and push our talents to new grounds. I'm proud to say this album keeps the rough edges of our birth but adds some polish of

our advancing career in music.

AU: Any stand-out tracks you are stoked on?

Murder Podcast is a short, catchy tune! There is a video on youtube we worked pretty hard on that's worth a watch! *The Bridge* is another one that is getting some good reaction. Its a bit of a new style for us and turned out great

AU: Any plans for the holiday this year?

Probably do as little as possible? Crush some pilsners, have some smokes and jam!

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

Only Santa knows the real answer to that.

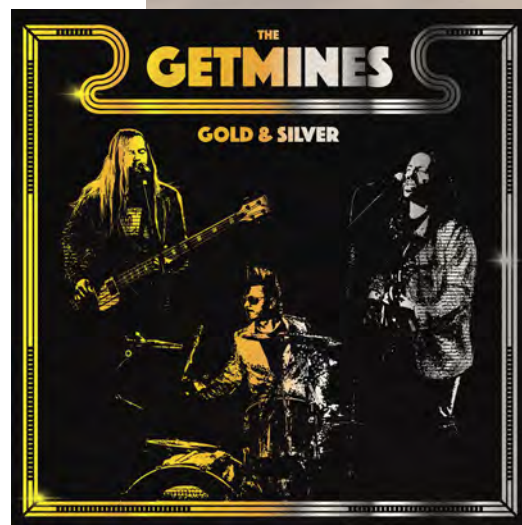
AU: Any other wicked bands from Vancouver?

Space Queen, Rebel Priest, Dead Quiet, Waingro, Worse, The Fomites are some of our favs!! There's a ton though! Get out to some shows and you will not be disappointed!

AU: What else should we know about you?

We're really nice.

AU: Any plans for an album release show?



Glad you asked!! February 7th we are playing the Waldorf in Vancouver. It is our official album release party and we will be joined by Space Queen, Rebel Priest and The Hairy Cherries. It's going to be themed. Hard Rock Disco. Everyone is encouraged to come sparkly and dance. All is welcome whether you sparkle or not, but

we can guarantee we will be donning our sparkle jackets and it'll be a fun time!

AU: Any plans to tour?

Yes sir! We did some short runs to the interior recently and there are plans in motion for Island shows, possibly March. We will also be heading back to Calgary in April 2025 because we had such a friggin blast last April!

AU: Final words for our readers?

Thanks for reading! Support this legendary magazine so it keeps on keeping on!

AU: How do people find you online?

@thegetmines on all the socials
<https://linktr.ee/thegetmines> has other links. We're on all the streaming platforms so check us out anywhere you listen to music!

Photo Credit: Felix Fung



Moral Decay

Gordon Head Thrash

Interview by Jason Flower

Toby Hicks: It was very much an unintended coming together of musical tastes, experience, and skill. In 1988, we were all in Grade 10, and attending Arbutus Secondary School. Originally, Pete and I had approached Dave to teach us guitar and bass, and jam Wehrmacht and Kreator songs. During these guitar lessons, some early songs were written. Dave had been playing with Jamie for a few years and after a handful of jams, we decided to form Moral Decay. At age 15, I learned guitar just to play in the band.

Jamie Willis: At around 13 years old, Dave and I started playing some Led Zeppelin, the Who, and Beatles tunes. I used a makeshift drum kit

(basically two toms, and that was it). About a year later this weird guy showed up at high school (Pete). Before I knew it, Pete, Toby, and Dave asked me to play with them. They were in the "rocker" or "cool" group. I was not part of the "A" crowd, but when I joined the band, that changed overnight.

Toby: I grew up in the Gordon Head Townhouses. Pete appeared at Arbutus Secondary in Grade 9 and rapidly befriended the punk and metal crowds, bridging the gap between them. Being a young musician in our new band was particularly challenging as I didn't know how to play guitar. Trying to learn Dave's complicated music was not easy. I always relied heavily on Jamie for drumstick prompts, so I knew when transitions in the song were coming.

The influences of Metallica and Van Halen brought by Dave and Jamie met with the thrash and death metal that Pete and I brought to the

band. We had also been sharing tapes for a couple of years: Kreator, Wehrmacht, the Accused, Death, Sepultura, Soothsayer, Sacrifice, Macabre, and other music of the underground.

Some of our first shows were at the Fernwood Community Centre with Deranged, Disciples of Abelard, Evisceration, Clusterfux, and more. We played several shows in Victoria and Vancouver with bands such as Caustic Thought, the Kill, and Malevolence.

Jamie: I think playing with Sacrifice in Kelowna was likely our highest and lowest point all at once. We got \$500, which was unheard of then, so we felt like big- shots... it was two nights, I think. Forced Entry was another memorable night. The Kill and Caustic Thought were our buddy bands in Vancouver, so we often played with them.

I recall thinking that music was my calling and that "making it" was likely going to happen. I was naïve at the time but can now see what the mainstream music scene did to people. In hindsight, I feel lucky that we declined the one and only potential record deal that came up.

Toby: Pete used to have the offer taped to his wall. I think it was Elektra Records under the Warner Group. It was a lengthy contract offer of six albums, but they expected us to pay for the recording and production of the first album. In 1990, that meant an exorbitant amount of money.

Jamie: There was some aggro mentality that often came with the metal package, and I do recall some tension with other bands, who were not quite the same supportive crew you find in the punk scene. As much as I liked the music, I didn't really fit the personality in many ways. Metal culture eventually got to Dave (more than any of us) and being the only writer, when he lost interest in the scene, it was sort of hard to continue a metal band. So, ultimately, we split and started making totally different music, which later became M Blanket. I recall something Dave told me at the Moral Decay gig in Kelowna that I think was the start of his change in taste: there was a brief power outage and a rocker chick at



the front said to Dave, "Are you gonna play soon, sexy?" He told me how disgusted he was, and things seemed to change after that.

Toby: The Kelowna show with Sacrifice was both a high point and a low point. I recall walking up on the hill behind the outdoor venue with Dave; we discussed how we were both feeling "over it" and not comfortable with what band life was looking like. Dave was the songwriter and his musical interests shifted in 1991. He had started listening to Pink Floyd a lot and suddenly metal was not interesting to him.

Jamie: I ended up playing with Tony Goluza and Dave Moran and never looked back. Dave and I stayed friends, of course, but no more playing music together.

Toby: I lost interest in metal as well. A couple of years later, shortly after Pete died in 1993, Jamie and I played in an alcohol-fueled punk/hardcore band called Jumbo Prawn, releasing one demo tape. Dave continued on with M Blanket, eventually morphing into Ache Hour Credo, and when that was finished, he formed Daddy's Hands.

In memory of Pete Randell 09/04/1973 - 02/03/1993 and Dave Wenger 06/30/1973 - 11/23/2006.

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Mrs. Henry

Interview by AU Editorial

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most known for?

Daniel Cervantes: My name is Daniel "Dude" Cervantes of the San Diego rock band Mrs. Henry, and one might say on an international level we are most infamous/famous for being the Robbie Robertson sanctioned group that celebrates The Band's music as Chest Fever—the official revival of The Band. I like to think this group has a knack for making the impossible happen as well and propagating a creative vision as the definitive rock n' roll Band of the 21st Century. Our newest album and rock opera release, *Keep on Rising*, is a good example of that dream brought to reality!

AU: Give us a brief history of Mrs. Henry.

DC: The group started in 2012, solidified in 2015, re-formed in 2022, and as of today we just on-boarded our newest drummer! The core of the group, myself (guitarist/singer), Jody Bagley (keyboards and vocals), and Blake Dean (bass and vocals), have been making music together for 10 years now. The newest recruits to the tribe are Ben Pinnola on keyboards, sax, drums, and Vocals, and our newest drummer Dakota Henry. Prior to that, Allan Ritter was our drummer for two years touring and recording with us all over North America and prior to that, Chad Lee, was our drummer for seven years. Chad wrote and recorded the rock opera with us during the pandemic and is featured on the band's records from 2016-2021.

AU: Describe the band's sound if possible. Who are your strongest musical influences?

DC: Huge! Big! Two keyboards, guitar, bass, drums, and four-part vocal harmonies tight as can be. We straddle as ambitious as Queen and as loose as Led Zeppelin. [Our sound] ranges from Tool to Soundgarden to Prince to Outkast. We grew up in the '90s and 2000s so at the core a rock n' roll band but we soak up all things that boogie. Of course, we've got the sound of The Band as a core influence but we take off from there. Jam band tendencies leaning towards the exploration of Phish and the Dead. Every night is a different show.

AU: How do you approach writing music?

DC: We approach writing as a group with everyone having creative input. To date, I've been the primary lyricist, but song ideas come from our experiences as a band together. "I Got Your Back", from *Keep on Rising* is a good example of that. After a rumble tumble 48 hours in The Big Apple,

that phrase came about and stuck with the group. A year later, it becomes a snippet of our tale in the rock opera epic we just put out. Stories we hear on the road or in life together become the backbone of our tales.

AU: *Keep on Rising* was just released in July. Tell us about it! Any favourite tracks?

DC: This rock opera and concept album release has been four years in the making, and the real big door prize is the physical album release! Limited-edition box set, three-vinyl LP collection, and double-disc CD. It took us a year to write and record all 38 songs of this record during the height of the pandemic. It was the biggest endeavour to date and a production we are very proud of. Our favourite tracks are the entire thing—you need to experience it as a whole and take it all in. Maybe have a smoke in the middle, take a walk and then come back. If we HAD to choose, some favourites would be "Bye, Bye, Baby", "Everybody Wants Peace and Love", "I Don't Want to Let You Go", "We're Gonna Win" and "Hope, Keep on Rising". Another key component is the artwork of *Keep on Rising*; our friend Alan Forbes created a visual universe based on the music, characters and themes. Very much in the spirit of Pink Floyd's *The Wall* and Gerald Scarfe. There is a book in the limited-edition box set that includes all the illustrations he made based on each song of the album and the individual acts. "Epic" is the word we'd choose to describe the totality of the project, and it continues to grow!

AU: Does it explore any particular themes or topics?

DC: It explores every theme and topic! Fear, love, death, peace, passion, lust, and life. At the core, the main theme and through line is hope.



AU: Any more new music in the works?

DC: We have a mammoth amount of releases on the way. The bulk are live, including our entire live concert recording from Canada's illustrious Massey Hall in 2023. It is an incredible feat, and the whole band is proud of celebrating the 45th anniversary release of *The Last Waltz*, bringing guests from around the world to join us on stage including legendary guitarist Albert Lee, Canadian royalty Sylvia Tyson, and original band collaborators Colin Linden and Cindy Cashdollar to name a few.

AU: Any upcoming shows or tours to promote?

DC: We are kicking off 2025 with a bang in Powell River at the Carlson Loft. We love playing in BC, and this show is the kick-off to a two-month run

as both Mrs. Henry and Chest Fever. We have eight shows in BC, a mix of just Mrs. Henry and double-headers with an opening set of original music, followed by a headlining show as Chest Fever. It took us a bit, but we found a way to open for ourselves that makes sense. You gotta come to the show to see it for yourself! After BC in Canada, we hit the West Coast down to our hometown of San Diego, and then on to the rest of the country to hit the Midwest, northeast and finishing strong

with three shows in Canada: St. Catharines and Toronto in Ontario, and our first show in Montreal, QC.

mrshenry.com

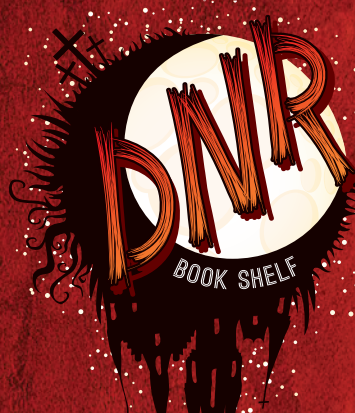
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KINKY BEACH: RYAN DYER'S LOATH-SOME LITTLE LIBRARY: BOOK 1



Ryan Dyer
Unveiling Nightmares Press,
October 4, 2024
This little novella was a breeze to read, very quick-paced and exciting from start to finish. From the demented mind of Ryan Dyer, his debut *Loathsome Little Library, Book 1* has one in the chamber ready to kill.

James and Cody are our main boys of interest, rough-housing, playing video games at James' fathers beach house on a regular day. Boredom and girls call them to the beach as they venture out waiting for the big WWE pay-per-view that night to commence. Finding something much more prurient than girls... gimps! The boys have no frame of reference for these strange beings other than the cult classic *Pulp Fiction*, so that's what they go with. Danger. James runs off to grab dad's gun from the cabin, leaving Cody to film the funny business while he waits for cover. The gimps get wise to the peeping toms and approach, the boys panic and it's an instant three ring circus. James has the worst day of his life and shit gets very weird for him once he puts together just who was a part of the gimp crew at the exciting conclusion.

Demonika

THROUGH THE NIGHT LIKE A SNAKE: LATIN AMERICAN HORROR STORIES



Tomás Downey, Mariana Enríquez, Mónica Ojeda, and More
Two Lines Press,
March 12, 2024

This collection of Latin American horror is the ninth offering in the Calico Series from Two Lines Press. The only horror-specific entry into the series, *Through*

the Night Like a Snake maintains the one consistent signature of all Calico volumes—quality contemporary voices. As always delights me with translated works of horror, we are invited to experience these tales through the fascinating double-filtered lens of writer and translator.

A man-sized vulture who goes about in suits like a human can't (or doesn't want to) escape his wild and cruel nature. The madness of "soroche"—altitude sickness—wreaks havoc among a group of supposed friends. A young man disappears for days after visiting the property of an elderly former Nazi and returns irrevocably changed. The nuns who live and work near a dangerous stretch of road may not be what they seem. Each tale presents a distinct narrative and an imaginative edge with varying degrees of sharpness. The authors responsible for the ten stories contained in these pages work with the skill of expert weavers to combine painful, vulgar reality with magical surrealism and salacious notes of terror and consequence, resulting in one of my favourite horror reads of this year.

Laura Phaneuf

THE LITTLE SEASON



S.C. Mendes
Blood Bound Books
July 4, 2024

Absolutely tore into this little occulty adventure, it was so mysterious and new, the possibilities just endless and exciting. I was engrossed and just loving it until about mid way through. You can kind of feel the author give up and the pace is completely different from then on. The cover art is very well done and inside more art is peppered throughout, which I really appreciate.

Our main figure, Jordan, is really struggling to find work and desperately takes a job as a food taster with a very high payout. Something isn't quite right and he deals with the consequences of his actions, both mentally and physically. The story takes an unexpected turn and kind of falls down into the religious/cult/conspiracies/esoteric rabbit hole and also touches on oneirology, nutrition, and holistics. Not a direction I would have picked, and that's where it kind of lost me.

The most frustrating part was the ending. I threw the book down. I don't get how something could start off so amazing and then just lose it so fast. It does leave it open for a part two, but the book was so small it felt like a rush close with no wrap-up.

Demonika

SON OF THE SLOB



Aron Beauregard
Independent,
July 27, 2021

Son of the Slob is *Bride of Chucky* to *The Slob's Child's Play*. Here we have the offspring of the repugnant killer from *The Slob*, conceived through deplorable means, seven years old and without a killer instinct, yet. It doesn't take long for it to kick in, however, with the aid of crystal meth, and then the story begins to feel like *Basket Case* mixed with the zombie baby from *Dead Alive*. It's twice as long as the original *Slob* book and leaves for some breathing room because of it, compared to the break-neck speed of *The Slob*. A funny, absurd and disgusting sequel which properly develops from the aftermath of *The Slob* and results in a pretty entertaining book.

Ryan Dyer

STOLEN PALLOR



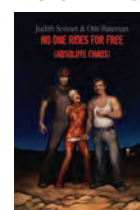
Sean Eads, Joshua Viola
Blood Bound Books,
July 16, 2024

When Cole was a child, he survived a horrific art gallery fire in which an entire room full of people patiently awaiting the piece's reveal were burned alive, including his father. This memory haunts him throughout. He lives in New Florence with his boyfriend who has certain psychic abilities which he leans on for mental support. The city is an incredibly rich city that is heavily focused on art with a specific area of interest, Midnight Village where one could get lost easily. Physically and mentally. The story choppily unfolds as he tries to unravel the mystery of the artist Fangsy and what he is up to and how it's all related to him and his experience as a boy.

I had given this one 3/5 on GoodReads because the idea had so much potential, having art and horror combined, the possibilities are endless. Unfortunately, this one just did not deliver. I really wanted it to, and for how short it is, what a struggle it was to get through. It was very choppy and at times just didn't make sense. It was often hard to unravel what you just read and if it was a memory, a thought, or real time.

Hatcheface

NO ONE RIDES FOR FREE -



ABSOLUTE CHAOS
Judith Sonnet, Otis Bateman
Slaughterhouse Press,
April 7, 2024

I have run the gauntlet of extreme horror novels now and for the most part, the stories have been somewhat original, but I can still often find cues or plot points within some stories that make me think "Oh, this author saw this or that and wanted to make a more extreme version of it."

So, with *No One Rides for Free* (*Absolute Chaos*), we have the extreme version of *The Devil's Rejects*. Just on the premise alone of killers in the desert, a museum at a truck stop (like *House of 1000 Corpses*) and innocents waiting to be mutilated in the worst way, I was bored. Why does everything have to be so Westernized or America-centric? Try some different settings and characters aside from cliché redneck killers.

The characters and dialogue here were written in a playfully lame manner at times. Subtlety might have fared better here with the dialogue but as everything else is pushed to the extreme here, there is no room for that. The death scenes are truly stomach-turning though, and it seems a lot of these writers simply want these murder set pieces to be what the reader remembers from their books. They always seem to involve something sexually grotesque as well— to continually push the scene over the tipping point until it becomes almost— no, not almost— truly absurd. Though I will remember them from this book, if nothing else.

Ryan Dyer

"EVERYBODY IS A BOOK OF BLOOD: WHEREVER WE'RE OPENED, WE'RE RED."
CLIVE BARKER, BOOKS OF BLOOD: VOLUMES ONE TO THREE

Submit your inquiries or reviews to:
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Featuring Dave Wenger of influential 1990s groups *Breakwater* and *Daddy's Hands*.

SE53



DERANGED
Lacerations
12" LP | 1988-89

Ferocious Deathrash
Victoria/Langford, BC, Canada

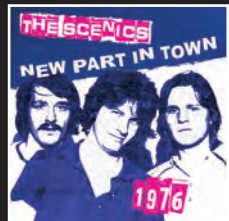
SE51



SACRED BLADE
Of The Sun + Moon
12" LP | 1986

Progressive, sci-fi power metal
Vancouver, BC, Canada

SE56



THE SCENICS
New Part in Town
12" LP | 1976

Proto-Punk / New Wave
Toronto, ON, Canada

SE61



DISTORTED INFLUENCE
Cold
12" LP | 1992

Crossover Thrash
Victoria, BC, Canada

SE47



THE DISHRAGS
Four
12" LP | 1980

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LUNCHMEAT



Christmas Crashes, Bashes and Slashes to Make Your Holiday Movie Marathons More Merry, Scary and Altogether WEIRD!!!

By Josh Schafer

Season's Meatings, Videovores! It's that time of the year when slay bells are wringing and axe grinders are singing... and bad Christmas puns abound, as if there were no better words worth slinging! And after you've ripped the paper flesh from your gifts aplenty, and you realize your credit cards are maxed out from too much spending, there sits your VCR patiently waiting... for fresh VHS flesh to chew in order to make the season bright, illuminating your face with awe and with fright... to bring you yuletide evenings full of strange seasonal cinematic delights! Well, that's just about what I got for a Christmas-themed cadence, my fellow festive film lovers, but now that it's over, you're in luck! Or something like it! In the spirit of giving, I've cooked up this here little collection of holiday favourites to keep by the fireside (watch out – this thing's flammable, man!) so you can drill your eyes into the weirdest reels of magnetic magic the low-budget universe has to offer... Some are classics, some are simply not. Some are seemingly from a different planet and devoid of any real plot. But all of them pack a punch bowl of sugary sweet cinematic satisfaction sure to make your yuletide viewing all the more merry, scary and altogether weird. Though this list is far from definitive, I can only hope you glean a few new merrymaking movie favourites that bring you joy for all your cinematic Christmas celebrations to come... 'cause that would be pretty groovy. And away we go!

ELVES (1989)

Dan Haggerty aka Grizzly Adams is perpetually puffing on a cigarette and out to stop some Nazis in what is arguably the most indispensable holiday horror flick for fans of amazingly awful analogue-only gems. A greazy, ghoulie-esque, open-mouthed "Elf" (notice the singular) is created by occult-obsessed Nazis to facilitate... GASP! A race of supermen! Can Grizzly stop the indestructible elf? Can he save the girl? Can he make it to the store for another pack of Camels on before it closes?! Implied incest, Santa stabbings, dreadful dialog and electrocuted boobies all await you in this laugh out loud Christmas cash in. This one is analogue essential, Tapeheads!

SANTA CLAUS (1959)

The insanely prolific Mexican movie mogul Rene Cardona directed nearly 150 movies and acted in just under 130, as well as spawned two generations of movie makers. Some of the more detail-oriented Videovores out there might recognize his name from low-budget trashterpieces such as *Night of the Bloody Apes*, *Brainiac* and a slew of Santo pictures; but for most, his name is associated with this holiday-themed freak out. Lucifer himself sets out to thwart Santa's do-good gift giving this year by sending forth his demon minion Pitch, but Santa (with the help of Merlin the Magician!) is hellbent (see what I did there) on saving the spirit of Christmas. Besides the ludicrous plot, laugh out loud dialog and abysmal dubbing, there's a scene that might remind you of a low(er) budget Bava complete with pyrotechnics and a (poorly) choreographed dance of the demons. At times surreal, at others unbelievably bad, but this particular crappy Christmas flick is guaranteed to entertain for all the weird reasons!

DON'T OPEN TILL CHRISTMAS (1984)

If you've already watched *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night* one too many times, try unwrapping this analogue era gem for a change, man! In this less-celebrated holiday horror from Edmund Perdom of *PIECES* fame, Santas everywhere are being maimed, murdered and chopped to bits. And their bits are being chopped, too! OUCH! Yes, death by straight razor, strangulation and a bathroom castration are just a few of the slimy, blood-spattered gifts that await you in this sleazy and violent low-budget blast.

SANTA WITH MUSCLES (1996)

The Hulkster plays a filthy rich fartass who bumps his noggin' and all of a sudden believes he's Santa Claus. This movie is terrible in every way possible which makes it fun to watch if you're the glutton for punishment type. Easily one of the worst movies ever made, and one of the hardest to get through. If you can stomach it, consider yourself a crappy Christmas cinema Champion, brotherrrr. Watch for Mila Kunis and Clint Howard in the mix.



TO ALL A GOODNIGHT (1980)

Here's some obscure holiday horror celebration directed by David Hess (*Last House On The Left*) that's really not as bad as most people think! Santa stalks a group of sorority girls (and their boyfriends) dismissing them in a variety of amusing ways including stabbings, slit throats, an axe in the head and death by a propeller blade! Plenty of kills, some boobies and a pleasing amount of gore, but the lighting in this one just ain't that great, man. Overall, this is an early and underrated slasher for your Christmas cinema list. Also, this was made four years before *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night*, and arguably the first slasher to feature a Santa-clad killer.

BLOODBEAT (1982)

Okay, okay, this one's a bit of a stretch, but since it's set at Christmas time, I had to put it in here. I mean, a glowing samurai spirit stalks a family's Christmas cabin getaway and dispenses of them via spiritual swords and arrows? And the samurai's strength is linked to orgasms? I think? Lousy but lovable special effects, flying soda cans and blood o' plenty make this weird, wonky and ultimately confusing slice of magnetic magic a must-see. Go on... use Christmas as an excuse to watch it. You won't regret it.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS (1972)

Starring Jessica Walter (of *Arrested Development* and *Play Misty For Me* fame) and Sally Field, here's

a less noted made-for-TV murder mystery / slasher hybrid concerning a holiday homecoming for a set of sisters who are asked to murder their father's wicked wife. Sounds easy enough, but things get messy when a raincoat clad killer shows up picking people off with a pitchfork. Arresting suspense, sharp plot twists and superb performances make this an underrated holiday horror that was decidedly before it's time.

SANTA AND THE ICE CREAM BUNNY (1972)

Ho Ho Hold it, Videovores. Are you dreaming of a weird Christmas? This is it. Infamous for being the biggest assembly of yuletide yawns there is, but redeemed by its utter inanity, *Santa And The Ice Cream Bunny* spins the pointless tale of Santa stuck in Florida with no reindeer! Bummer! But the kiddies try to help him move his sleigh in various ways including employing a dude in a gorilla suit! It's bananas, man! But alas, it doesn't work and all seems lost. Until the Ice Cream Bunny shows up in a fire truck to save the day. Only problem? The Ice Cream Bunny doesn't even have any damn' ice cream! What is this shit?! This soporific slice of "cinema" was produced by a theme park called Pirate's World in order to drum up some business, but since you've never heard of Pirate's World, you can see what good it did. The release also includes a film called *Thumbelina* that's actually longer than the Santa bit. Hard-to-find and VHS only (save the Rifftrax version), this is pure cinematic junk food that'll stick to yer teeth for many Christmases to come. Whether you likes it or not!

CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR (1936)

This one's gotta be one of my all-time favourite old-school holiday animations. You probably already know it, but maybe not by name. This Max Fleischer produced colour cartoon appears on a profusion of collections, and concerns a group of kiddies at an orphanage who receive toys, only to have them self-destruct and seemingly turn Christmas into a catastrophe. But Professor Grampy sparks up a light bulb and pulls together every pot, pan and thingamajig around and makes some real magic happen. Historically notable as Professor Grampy's only appearance in colour, and without Betty Boop, this wonderfully fluid animation is still as fun to watch as it was nearly 80 years ago.

THE DISEASE THAT STOLE CHRISTMAS (1995)

I've got the one and only Weird Paul Petrosky to thank for introducing me to this slice of cable access insanity.

It's beyond obscure, and unavailable on any format, but you can view a couple clips (which is enough) from this nigh unbelievable holiday obscurity right here. Oh, and while you're at it, be sure to peep Weird Paul and all his amazing internet antics. He's quite possibly one of the coolest people on the planet.

GEORGE AND THE CHRISTMAS STAR (1985)

From the director of cult favourite *Heavy Metal* (1981) comes this unconventional animated

Christmas obscurity about a guy named George who is bored with his normal tree topper, and decides to slap together a spaceship to venture into space and snatch up the Christmas Star to perch on top of his tannenbaum. George blasts off almost directly into a black hole, befriendng a robot named Ralph as they encounter a cast of characters from Space Pirates, to a captured astronaut to old Saint Nick himself. They even come across a group of outlaw space bikers called "Bell's Angels"! WHOA! The cartoon is an adorable mix of two distinct animation styles: a *School House Rock* essence for the characters, and a more detailed *Monty Python*-esque style for George's spaceship. It's an interesting and cute contrast, and if you can withstand a few corny musical numbers, this just might be your new Christmas morning cartoon go-to. And speaking of new cartoon go-tos, be sure to peep the holiday animation obscurity *Cosmic Christmas* (1977). Aliens come to Earth and learn the meaning of Christmas the hard way? DIG IT.

SANTA'S CHRISTMAS CIRCUS (1966)

Believed to be a lost film, this slice of Eastman Colour Christmas delirium is saved by fellow obscure film nuts preserving the trailer online. Just from the little under two minutes offered, we get a glimpse of a misty magic carpet ride, a kid in a lion costume busting a backflip, low-budget puppetry (a reindeer playing a trombone!) a full-on wind-up toy town, cheapo cardboard electronics and, of course, a creepy clown named Whizzo. It looks like it was shot in one room for about \$20... so I imagine at full-length, it's a real brain melter, man.

You know there's a seemingly endless amount of end-of-the-year cinematic celebration to be had, so don't forget about all of these Chrismuch Clashucks (and not so Clashucks, too), mang! *The Magic Christmas Tree* (1964), *Christmas Martian* (1971), *We Wish You a Turtle Christmas* (1994), *The Man in the Santa Claus Suit* (1979), *Santa Claus* (1985), *Home Alone* (1990), *Scrooged* (1988), *Christmas Evil* (1980), *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (5 of them! 1984 – 1991), *Gremlins* (1984), *Rare Exports: A Christmas Tale* (2010), *He-Man and She-Ra Christmas Special* (1985), *Silent Night, Bloody Night* (1972), *Black Christmas* (1974), *Santa Claus Conquers the Martians* (1964), *Jack Frost* (1997), *A Claymation Christmas* (1987) - Thanks to Uncouth for the reminder! *Ernest Saves Christmas* (1989), *The Trolls and the Christmas Express* (1981), *Here Comes Santa Claus* (1984), *It's a Wonderful Life* (1946), *Christmas Story* (1983), *Christmas Vacation* (1989), *B.C.: A Special Christmas* (1981), *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* – "The Reindeer Hunter" (1995), *The Tick* – "The Tick Loves Santa!" (1994), *Beavis and Butt-Head Do Christmas* (1995), *Santa's Slay* (2005), *Female Trouble* (1974), *Scrooge's Rock n' Roll Christmas* (1984), *Ren & Stimpy: Have Yourself a Stinky Little Christmas* (1991), *It's a Bundyful Life* (1989), *The Star Wars Holiday Special* (1978), *The Twilight Zone* – "The Night of the Meek" (1960).

HAPPY HOLIDAZE AND MERRY MAGNETIC MUNCHING, VIDEOVORES! PEACE, Analogue, AND GROOVY GOODWILL TO ALL!

lunchmeatvhs.com



Cuff it Up!

By CJ Sleez

'Tis the season for cuffing. The term used to describe the social trend of singles searching for a temporary relationship to help get them through the cold, dark, and often boring months between Halloween and Valentine's. Personally, I think "cuffing" sounds more like S&M bondage play than a behavioural phenomenon, but hey... I guess I'm old fashioned like that.

In stark contrast to this trend, December will mark the date when 18 years ago, I met my husband. So just in case you do decide you want to keep your winter 'fun-buddy' around past the spring thaw, here's a couple quick tips that have helped us to stay together this long and still enjoy being around each other...most of the time.



Hang in there!

While the first year is full of fresh passion and excitement, it's also the most tumultuous. This is the time when you're gradually discovering all those odd habits and annoying quirks in the other person. Then there's the fights. I guarantee... You will disagree on a great many things, and that's a good thing. I mean, if someone is continuously agreeing with every opinion you have, it's going to get really irritating, really quickly. Appreciate the fact that they are bringing a different perspective to your world. When things get heated (in the wrong way), take a break from talking, move on to a less contentious topic or just bang it out—angry sex can get pretty wild! If you can somehow both stick it out through that first year together, it does gradually get a bit easier over time.

Keep a small sense of mystery between you.

That near perfect image of you that they envisioned at the start of your relationship will inevitably begin to show cracks as they realize that you are indeed a human with flaws. So why taint it any further? Give each other the precious gift of privacy. Most personal grooming and all basic

CALL ME CRAZY

bodily functions are best done behind a closed door. Your lover doesn't need to see you sitting on the toilet, cleaning out your dirty toenails, or putting anything up your nose (be it tweezers, trimmers or fingers). It's not flattering and it's NOT sexy... At least to the majority of the world anyway— and if you do happen to be one of the freaks with a fetish for watching that kinda stuff, this article probably isn't for you anyway.

But here's the big one...

Don't let jealousy get the better of you.

Jealousy is like absinthe; in small doses it can be fun and exciting, stoking the fire of desire for your partner... but a few more drinks and your perception will start to become skewed and twisted. Keep on drinking, and it can eventually kill you. When jealousy shifts and becomes possessiveness, it will slowly poison your relationship.

Things like tracking your partner's cell location and snooping through their phone or personal and private possessions is clingy and controlling. These behaviours reek of insecurity and immediately shift the dynamic in any relationship. If you believe there's someone better out there waiting to pull them away from you, why wouldn't your

partner start to feel the same? It's not their job to constantly reassure you of their devotion.

This is more about respect than trust. Respect for the other person of course, but mainly it's about having respect for yourself. Being with someone that other people want is empowering and jealousy robs you of that power. When your partner gets hit on, hell, take it as a compliment! If you catch their eye wandering, show them something more enticing to focus on. Losing your confidence means losing some of your appeal, so don't be that person. You're better than that.

But hey, if all you're interested in is a short-term holiday hook-up to help fill the solitude during the quiet months of the Canadian freeze... all the power to you. Have fun with it! My only advice here is to make sure that you're both on the same page. If you're honest with each other and can be clear about managing any expectations, it'll be a lot more likely for your winter fling to end in a drama-free spring. In any case, here's hoping you all stay hot this holiday season. Cheers!

Photo by Marshal Asif

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Top Winter Picks for the Fireside

By Ed Sum

When readers want a dose of horror to go along with their holiday plans, the best way to do so is to read a comic book! This year, the pickings may be small, and I find the following are my top five:

VAMPIRELLA HELLIDAY 2024 SPECIAL #1

Dynamite Entertainment

Vampirella has faced it all over the years, including demons, vampires, her deranged sister, and her monstrous mother. But before now, she's never gone up against... the Naughty List! Legendary writer Frank Tieri spins a decidedly dark winter's tale as Vampirella takes on the scourge of the North Pole in *Vampirella Helliday 2024 Special #1*!

Illustrated by Mariano Benitez Chapo, this festively fractured fable is decorated with seasonally seductive covers from Jae Lee, Joseph Michael Linsner, Dan Panosian, and cosplay by Dizzymslizzyy!

GRIMM TALES OF TERROR 2024 HOLIDAY SPECIAL

Zenescope Entertainment Inc

Have a holly, jolly night of terror as Keres the Goddess of Death checks her list once, and punishes all those unlucky naughty souls who won't get a second chance. Set during the happiest time of year, follow four horrifying tales sure to add an extra chill to your blood this year!

THROUGH THE BOUGHS

DSTLR

Discover these delights and dangers in *Through The Boughs: A Yuletide Offering*, a collection of frozen tales brought to you by the most magical wordsmiths



COMIC-GEDDON

and artisans in comics and beyond, including James Tynion IV (*Spectregraph*), Patrick McHale (Guillermo del Toro's *Pinocchio*, *Over the Garden Wall*), Jim Campbell (*Over the Garden Wall*), Jensine Eckwall (*Into the Goblin Market*), Ryan Andrews (*This Was Our Pact*), Sweeney Boo (*Harley Quinn*), K. Wroten (*Eden II*), Natalie Andrewson (*The Nutcracker And The Mouse King*), Grim Wilkins (*Mirenda*), and Molly Mendoza (*Stray*). Edited by Bryce Gold and Sean Edgar.

NEW YEAR'S PREY

SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT VOL 1

American Mythos

This comic book publisher wants to make sure readers can last through one day and enter 2025 with a scream! With *New Year's Prey*, Jake and Sylvie are invited to a shindig where they hope high society will accept them. But what they find is something that may well send them screaming! In the Janus house, there's something sinister waiting in the bowels, waiting to feed...

And with the latter, this collection honouring the 40th anniversary of the movie *Silent Night, Deadly Night* is sure to be just as deadly. After Billy saw his parents killed by a madman in a Santa suit, nothing has been the same since. He has been a victim several times, alone, and this book will examine what he has become.



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Hibernia Comics

Interview by Steve Earles

Ireland's Hibernia Books have carved out a reputation for publishing high-quality graphic novels of great British comics from the past. The man behind Hibernia, David McDonald, has kindly taken time to talk to me about all things Hibernia!

Absolute Underground: What inspired you to start Hibernia in the first place?

Dave McDonald: About 20 years ago, Titan Books got the license to reprint *The Steel Claw* and *The Spider*, but they didn't have the actual comics to scan the strips from. They put out a call to various websites at the time and I got in touch with them, as I had the comics they needed. Titan borrowed my comics to produce their collections from and it got me thinking, "I have a large comic collection, maybe I could do the same thing!" As *Doomlord* was a personal favourite, I set about getting the license for it, and printing Hibernia's first collection *Doomlord: The Deathlords of Nox*. It was a bit of a disaster, as I didn't really know what I was doing, but it was a great learning ground.

AU: You have a close relationship with Rebellion, the publishers of 2000AD and Judge Dredd and holders of a huge archive of classic comics, can you tell us about that?

DM: Rebellion are great; they really have an interest and knowledge of all the classic material that they own, and they are not afraid to put out lesser-known collections. It would be very easy

for them to just churn out *Trigan Empire* and *Steel Claw* collections, but we're getting humour and girls' comics collections, and an array of collections from the adventure comics; this would have been unthinkable a decade ago!

AU: What are your favourite books from those that Hibernia have published?

DM: To be honest, I like them all because I generally reprint what I like myself, but I'd have to say the Kevin O'Neill collection *Cosmic Comics*, as getting to work with one of my comic heroes was brilliant. I also love doing the *Comic Archive* series, which has interviews, articles and lesser seen art, mostly about Fleetway and IPC comics.

AU: What projects do you have lined up next?

DM: *Slave of the Screamer* by Tom Tully and Jesus Blasco, which will hopefully be out midsummer

2024. *Slave of the Screamer* is a cracker. Utterly bonkers, as only the early '70s can be! Then another comics archive, tentatively titled *Comic Cuts*, hopefully out in the autumn of 2024. This archive is called *Comic Cuts* because it's a bit of a mix rather than the themed earlier comics archives Hibernia have published, as the content is not exactly nailed yet! I have enough material for other three-comic archives bubbling away in various stages of development. The comic archives are a bit organic; contents can change right up until the last minute before publication. I intend to have a piece on Kevin O'Neill with unseen art, interviews with Roy Preston and



Brian Walker, an article on the sales of British comics, unseen art from Brendan McCarthy, Mick McMahon, and a lot more. It will be great! Hopefully it will include something too from Chris Lowder, and piece on Gary Leach as well.

AU: There's a lot of interest in books Hibernia have previously printed. Have you any plans to do new runs of these?

DM: I have no plans to reprint any of these at the moment. I prefer to spend time on getting together and printing new comic collections, and comic archives, but again, you never know!

AU: You had plans to publish a book on the short-lived, but much loved, comic Starlord (Starlord gave us the Strontium Dog and Ro-Busters stories, as well as a slew of other gems like Timequake). Readers would love to see the Starlord book, will it ever be published?

DM: Not in the form I originally envisaged. The *Starlord* archive was originally planned to be published to coincide with the 45th anniversary of *Starlord*. However, I ended up doing another project for another publisher and the date slipped. I still have all the material I gathered, so it will likely see print in a future comic archive.

AU: What's your dream publishing project?

DM: If money and time were no object, it would be those glorious tabloid covers of comics from the last century: *Mickey Mouse Weekly*, *Boys World*, those amazing double-page spreads of *The Eagle* from the '60s (blasphemy, I know, but the '60s *Eagle* was better than the '50s *Eagle*!), and all that beautiful artwork from children's and nursery titles that

will never likely be reprinted. Our recent *Lost Treasures* book is a good example of this. How commercially viable the above-mentioned are, is a completely different question.

AU: I love your reprint of The Angry Planet from Tornado. The Massimo Bellardinelli artwork is sublime! Is there any story Massimo drew that you'd like to reprint?

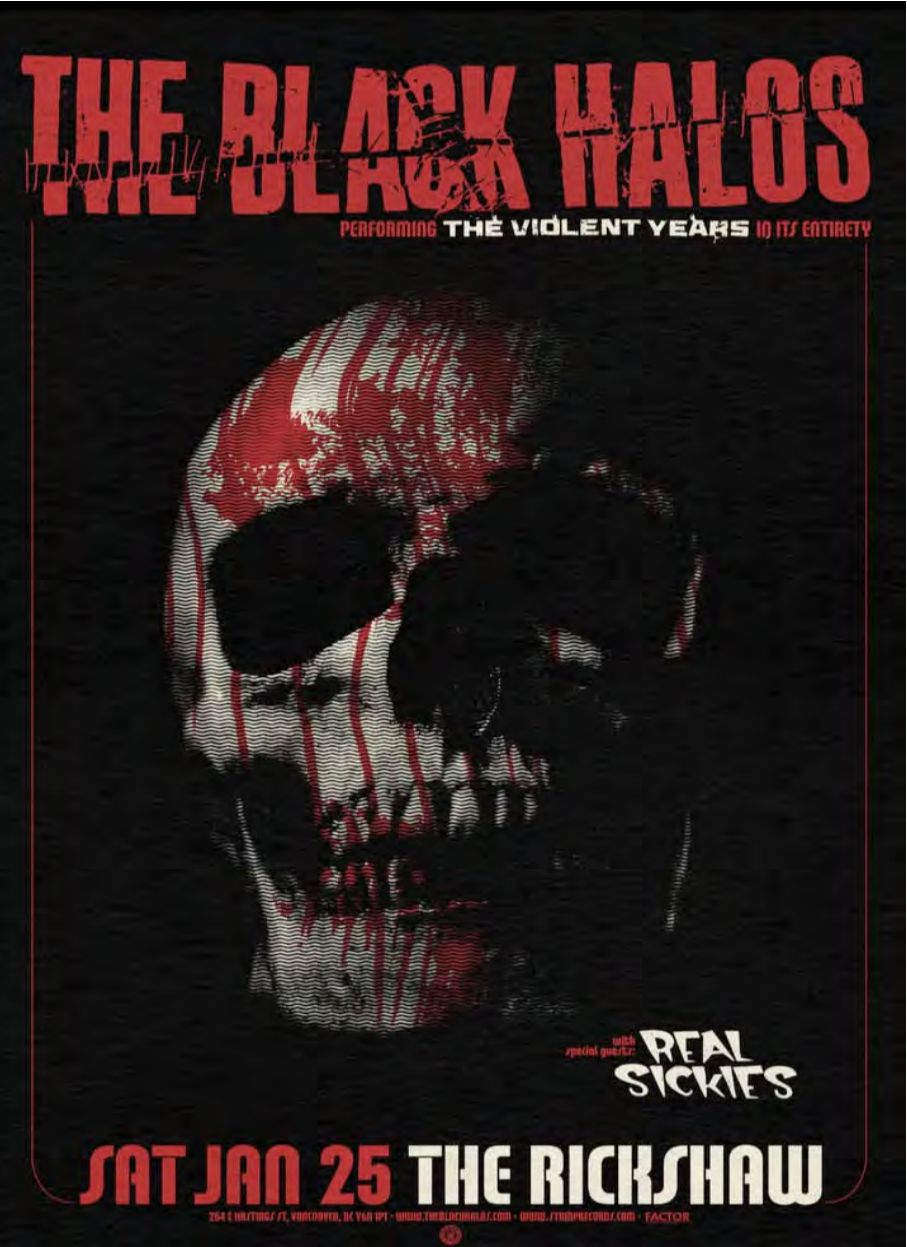
DM: Yup! *Flame of the Forest* from *Lion*, a cracking tale of Anglo-Saxon/Norman England. I'm not sure if all of it is drawn by Massimo like his work in *Action*, but his hand is definitely involved!

AU: I also love the two Jose Ortiz-illustrated collections The Tower King (a post-apocalyptic take on King Arthur, like a modern medieval version of Escape From New York) and The House of Daemon (a high-concept haunted house story by John Wagner and my late, much-missed friend, Alan Grant). Can you tell us about those? Would you consider reprinting some of Ortiz's other work from the new Eagle?

DM: The *Eagle* was the first "new" comic that I really remember reading, and while Dan Dare was the star, the two best stories were *Doomlord* by Alan Grant and the aforementioned *Tower King*. Those were two great stories and the Ortiz artwork on *The Tower King* was amazing, fresh off the Warren Comics, where Ortiz made such a name for himself. I think it's some of his best. *House of Daemon* for the same reasons; there are a lot of ideas in that story that crop up elsewhere. A telepath called Cassandra, anyone? It's also the prototype for *The 13th Floor* from the same creative team. *Thaddius Thorn* is a decent tale drawn by Ortiz too. But the one *Eagle* Ortiz and I have

ambitions to do is *Survivor*, a nasty pre-*Walking Dead* tale of surviving the wiping out of all adults. It's a cracking tale well-worthy of being seen again by a new audience.

[@hiberniabooks](http://comicsy.co.uk/Hibernia)





Street Trash

Interview by Ira Hunter, Cody "No Teeth" Cook, Brenin Barrow, and Vince D'Amato

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most famous and or infamous for?

Ryan Kruger: *Fried Barry*.

AU: How did you first become interested in making movies?

RK: I grew up watching movies in the '80s and was introduced to a lot of films by my dad, also making regular trips to the video shop and hitting cinemas.



AU: What made you decide to revisit the *Street Trash* world 37 years later?

RK: I was approached to write and direct the film after the producers saw my film *Fried Barry* on the hit show *The Last Drive-in with Joe Bob Briggs*. I was a fan of the original and I thought it would be great to make the film and could be a lot of fun, but I wanted to make it more of a sequel.

AU: What was your elevator pitch to make the sequel?

RK: Gore, goo, multi-coloured blood explosions, set in dystopian South Africa, government killing off the homeless, and we follow a gang of reject misfits.

AU: Did you feel like there was more to expand on from Director J. Michael Muro's original?

RK: As a fan of the original film growing up, I didn't want to copy the film. I wanted to have my own stamp on this film, but I wanted to take the things people liked most from the original film such as the in-camera prosthetics with '80s gore, and homeless characters, and then of course the DNA of the film is that we have multi-coloured goo and we have Viper. So, I just introduced Viper in a new way where the government has got a hold of it and is using it to kill off the homeless.

AU: Have you followed any of Muro's Hollywood work?

RK: I know he worked on Kevin Costner's new film.

AU: What drove you to shoot on 35mm instead of digital?

RK: I always thought that we were going to shoot digital until Justin A. Martel said would I like to shoot on film, which I answered straight away can we shoot on 35mm. Shooting on film was great and a lot of cast and crew really brought their A game so we didn't have to do multiple takes. But I never thought I'd ever shoot a film on 35mm, it was great and there's nothing like the look of film. People should shoot more on film.

AU: How difficult was it in this modern age of filmmaking to shoot on film? I'm assuming

getting film stock, cameras, and an editing machine wouldn't be an easy task.

RK: It was really easy, to be honest. The only thing is the delay when we send the film to get processed. Basically, we would shoot for three to four days then send the film off to be developed in the UK and then they would send us a digital version back two days later, and only then we could see what we shot. Playback screen for night scenes was always hard to see on the monitor, as the quality was terrible.

AU: Is it also hard finding film labs to process the film these days?

RK: There's quite a few places around the world, we sent ours to the UK and we had Kodak on our side.

AU: The film felt very much like a Troma movie! Justin and Matt who both used to work for Troma worked on the film, did they have any influence on the overall tone?

RK: I really don't think it had a Troma feel or look personally, nothing against Troma, but they have a very certain style of film and characters. I wrote the script and they green-lit it and we had the blessing from Muro.

AU: Muro's film was infamously total chaos during filming—was that the case with your production?

RK: I work with amazing cast and crew, we did a lot of pre-prod which is a must for any film. I always say pre-prod is KING; you need to plan shit if you want stuff to run smooth. Everything did, so we were very lucky.

AU: Did you go back to revisit anything from Akita Kurosawa's "DoDesKaDen", which the original *Street Trash* was loosely based on inspired by?

RK: I really just wanted to do my own thing and have my stamp on it with my style of filmmaking, if you have watched *Fried Barry*, you will know what I mean. As a fan, I think I gave enough respect and nods to the original.

AU: Was this a dream project for you?

RK: Not really, I never knew I was going to do this film. It came up out of nowhere, but what I can say is that it felt like a film I wanted to see as a kid and has that '80s feel.

AU: Any other cult films deserving of sequels you would like to direct?

RK: All depends on the story and script.

AU: Why did you choose to have the film set in South Africa instead of New York like the original?

RK: Because

sequel and really didn't have to set it in the same place. To make it different and have a different edge and feel I wanted to bring it to South Africa. Audiences are still learning about South Africa and we have a lot of cool shit that is different here.

AU: The melt film of the '80s is a lost, classic, genre of horror that you don't normally see anymore. Is there any hope that your film will spark a fire under other filmmakers to start making more modern melt films, full of practical effects?

RK: I really hope so, in fact I think there will be; it's great to see what's going on in the horror scene at the moment. There's definitely a new wave of cool films happening like the '80s did, so I really think things are going to be pushed even more for these types of films. Who doesn't love goo and gore?

AU: Did you strive to keep the same over-the-top neon colour aesthetic?

RK: It's part of the DNA of *Street Trash* that's something you 100% have to do, otherwise it wouldn't work.

AU: Where can people watch *Street Trash* and will there be a physical release?

RK: Vinegar Syndrome will be releasing a Blu-ray soon. People can watch it right now on digital platforms in the USA such as Apple TV and Amazon Prime.

AU: Have you got an X-Mas movie brewing inside you?

RK: There's a few but that's all I can say, let's see what happens.

AU: Best horror X-Mas movie of all time?



RK: *Gremlins*.

AU: Have you been naughty or nice?

RK: Always naughty.

AU: What are you asking Santa for this year?

RK: For me to be nice.

AU: VHS or Blu-ray?

RK: 100% both

AU: Any words of advice for aspiring filmmakers?

RK: Go out and do it, find people that want it just as much as you and go make a film. As soon as

you have done day one, that's the first major step, what people find the hardest.

AU: What's the next Ryan Kruger thing you will be working on?

RK: I am finishing a black and white art house indie flick with Gary Green (*Fried Barry*) and there's a few films, we are just waiting for

budget to come through, so have to wait and see.

AU: Final words.

RK: Wherever you go, there you are.

FB: [RyanKrugerOfficial](#)

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Photos by Graham Bartholomew

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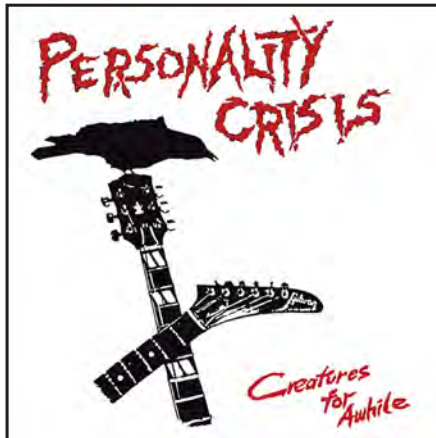
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that finally did. Fleeing the oppressive suburb of Windsor Park in 1979, he began rehearsing with the experimental punk band Le Kille at the House of Beep, perhaps Winnipeg's first punk house. The man didn't so much play the bass guitar as he hammered it with his wrists and elbows, breaking strings he couldn't afford in the process. Singer 'Bing' Bauer had his own thing going on, but I first became aware of the deep baritone that would become central to Personality Crisis when Mitch assumed lead vocals for the Joy Division cover, 'She's Lost Control.' The rangy performer, who became famous

for wearing the ugliest shirts imaginable both onstage and off, stole the show. Le Kille was fun but the members had an unfortunate tendency to overindulge beforehand. "I remember us playing three different songs at the same time because we couldn't read the set list," said Mitch when I interviewed him for my Personality Crisis biography. Le Kille



guitars and thunderous rhythm section. The band eventually fled the stage, inspiring us to shout loudly and bang ashtrays full of butts on the tables until they broke. Frantic, the bar manager ran upstairs and offered

the boys a two-four of beer to play a few more songs before their fans wrecked the place. Surprised by the wild reception, the sweaty musicians came back downstairs and proceeded to tear the roof off the place. What a night.

Personality Crisis underwent a number of personnel changes and slowly morphed into a supergroup that featured singer Mitch Funk, Jim Green and Richard Duguay on guitars, Duane Froslev playing bass, and Jon Card replacing Mark Halldorson on drums. The classic lineup soon climbed to the top of Winnipeg's punk hierarchy, headlining over such incendiary acts as the Stretch Marks and the Unwanted. That amazing lineup packed our favourite punk club so regularly that we actually began to whine. That's right, we were so spoiled that we complained



about seeing Personality Crisis, Stretch Marks, and Unwanted at Wellington's every weekend. We were part of something special that had never happened before and could never happen again.

Personality Crisis took their act on the road, embarking on gruelling months-long tours across Canada and the United States, surviving largely on potato chip sandwiches and cheap American beer. The band was well-received by punk fans but the press didn't know what to make of them, and without management they floundered. Unable to break through in a meaningful way, they recorded the amazing *Creatures for a While* in Vancouver and went home to lick their wounds. They were exhausted.

The band was running on empty when they played their second last show, which was at the Playhouse Theatre in Winnipeg on

August 17, 1984. Duguay, who left the band shortly before then, was now the stage manager at the Playhouse and had the unenviable job of telling his former bandmates they were running overtime. Winnipeggers wouldn't see Personality Crisis again until 2017, when they played the Pyramid Cabaret with wunderkind guitarist Jason Eastwood filling in as needed. There were more than a few damp eyes in the room when they left the stage dripping wet for the very last time. The show was bittersweet but I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

Mitch developed blood cancer in the '00s but kept it mostly to himself. His electrifying stage presence notwithstanding, he was a private person who shunned the limelight. The iconic artist left us sometime around midnight on December 2nd, 2024. We'll never forget his explosive performances, hideous shirts, and dry humour. Rest in punk.

Chris Walter
12/16/24

Photos by Doug Humiski

R.I.P. Mitch Funk: Creature for a While (1959-2024)

Winnipeg was a bit slow to catch on to punk rock, but Mitch Funk was part of the small vanguard of angry kids





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R.I.P Gerald Eugene Tengelis

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There are a lot of different people who work behind the scenes to make events fun and safe for everyone attending. One group of people entrusted to protect us are the bouncers and door people, who are often not credited for the roles they play at so many venues across the city.

Sadly, Calgary lost one of the great ones at the beginning of this November.

Gerald Eugene Tengelis, better known as Jerry, passed away at his home on November 1st, 2024, not two weeks before his 68th birthday. He came into this world on November 13th, 1956 in Chatham, Ontario to Elsa and Eugene Tengelis. He is survived by his loving partner Sarah Still, his 23 month-old daughter Legacy Tengelis and his unborn daughter Octavia Tengelis. On top of being a father and husband, Jerry was also a brother, an uncle, a son, and a dear friend.

You may very well have crossed paths with Jerry at any number of Calgary's events or live shows over the years. For almost two decades (if not more), he guarded the doors of so many venues and bars across the city. Although some would describe him as intimidating in stature, Jerry had a giant heart that you might not expect. He was known for a good laugh around the poker table and for always having a Tim Hortons cup in hand. Jerry was very loved by his relatives, friends, and industry family alike. He will be very missed amongst the community.

- Jess Panther





666



R.I.P.
PAUL DI'ANNO
MAY 17, 1958 - OCTOBER 21, 2024

motörhead

PHOTO: MARCO BENJAMIN ALVARADO

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Absolute Live



BISON - Photo by Ryan Dyer

Ancients, Bison, Iron Tusk

October 15, Dickens, Calgary AB

Ancients and Bison are two pieces of Canadian bacon on the same plate– both respected Western Canadian bands who perform a sludgy form of prog/stoner metal and both who honestly deserve more recognition and accolades than they’ve received. A few years ago, Opeth and Mastodon played at the Grey Eagle Casino and brought hundreds. Compare it to these two, who are more or less Western Canada’s version of these two bands and instead of big luxurious buses, it’s a few U-hauls outside of Dickens (no disrespect to Dickens) to perform in front of roughly 100 fans (it was a Tuesday night so respect to those who showed up).

It seems to be hard for a stoner/sludge fan base to really emerge in the city– it’s like folks only pay attention to the major bands and not Canada’s own and I’m not sure how to counter that. This review can hopefully help the situation.

Ancients in particular just released *Beyond the Reach of the Sun*, an album that the band should be extremely proud of. Their headlining slot included several songs from the album, though because it was a Tuesday they didn’t keep us so long and ended at 11, sharp.

Bison have a long history with Calgary. I have seen the band on several occasions - from pre-Metal Blade days to the glory tours with Goatwhore and now, an era which sees Bison as something of a legendary cult band. A band that does make you proud to be Canadian, as corny as that sounds. Guitarist James Farwell was under the weather on this night, so most of the songs were ones featuring Dan And’s distinct roaring vocals like “Fear Cave”.

Iron Tusk opened the show. Carlin Black Rabbit’s more metallic band featured Owls & Eagles’ Ross Ferguson on bass for his first show with the band. Black Rabbit’s drumming sounded like a mammoth stampede this night. In name and sound, they were the right opener for the job.

- Ryan Dyer

Carnifex, Cryptopsy, Mental Cruelty, Organectomy, Heavy//Hitter

October 12, Macewan Hall Ballroom, Calgary AB

It was a big ol’ Canadian Thanksgiving dinner of deathcore and death metal at Macewan Hall featuring the big turkeys Carnifex and Cryptopsy and the tasty sides of Mental Cruelty, Organectomy and Heavy//Hitter.

Both Carnifex and Cryptopsy I have memories of when they both performed at the long-gone Underground. Carnifex in particular I saw when they had first come out and the show that night had maybe 20 people in attendance. I admire that they stuck to their guns and have had a respectable career in deathcore. Sure, they aren’t the Metallica of deathcore, but they are certainly at least the Testament– never really going soft or breaking

Exodus, Havok, Dead Heat, Candy

Nov 29, The Palace, Calgary AB

Exodus’ last two visits with Anthrax and Testament have felt like a build up to this headlining concert. The last time the band played a show with top billing in the city was way back in 2008 with Rob Dukes on vocals– a savage era with an equally savage set at the Warehouse. Now in 2024, the band brought their Battle of ’24 tour with Havok, Dead Heat and Candy supporting to the eager fans who braved the cold on a frigid November night to get heated with fires of division.

While the posters promoting the show advertised Dead Heat as openers, Candy opened, which confused some as they had no banner, with Dead Heat’s up instead. The Relapse Records-signed band brought out the hardcore dancers, who will always show up to a show with any type of hardcore-affiliated band. Candy were what these folks wanted, though their flavour was rather one dimensional and after a while a new taste was needed, that being Dead Heat. This California-based crossover band was also a hit with the dancers and kept the energy level rising before direct supporters Havok took the stage.

“New breed, old creed, let’s see what you’ve got” say the lyrics to Exodus’s “Blood In, Blood Out”, and Havok certainly showed what the new breed can bring. The Denver neo-thrash band honestly rivaled the sound and presentation of Exodus, with the band performing new age thrash classics like “From the Cradle to the Grave” to the perpetual swarm of moshers.

Exodus’ headlining set saw them take to the stage with guns blazing. It felt like being reunited with friends after a year apart, which is a feeling vocalist Steve Souza likely shares. The longtime Flames fan dedicated the set to the Gaudreau brothers and sported his jersey during the last few songs of the set, which was composed of material throughout their career (even a Dukes song) and ended with “Strike of the Beast.” All trash, no encore needed with this type of energy. Until next year, Exodus.

- Ryan Dyer

Dropkick Murphy, Pennywise

October 13, Harbour Event Centre, Vancouver BC

I was greeted by a lengthy line up when I arrived at the downtown Vancouver venue. It was a nice fall evening, so people of all ages didn’t seem to mind the wait. Unfortunately, I missed the opening band The Scratch by the time I finally made it inside, but from what I hear they were a fun, high-energy Irish folk punk outfit. I quickly grabbed a drink at the bar as Pennywise was already rocking the stage with their blend of nostalgic pop punk. They even played some snippets of NOFX songs which notched up the crowd’s enthusiasm. Of course, they rounded out their set with the timeless classic “Bro Hymn”, finishing off a decent performance which only could have been better with a bit less on-stage banter. After a short break (and a couple more overpriced beers) the Dropkick Murphys hit the stage, opening up with the hard-hitting anthem “The Boys are Back” which set the tone for the rest of the evening. The energy was kept high with a great mix of songs spanning their almost three-decade career, completing their encore with the underrated working class tune “Worker’s Song”. It was my first time seeing DKM without Al Barr and while it did feel like there was a void, Ken Casey stepped up and did a fantastic job with lead vocals, even with the venue’s sound not doing him any favours.

- Brenin B



KING DIAMOND - Photo by Rae Chatten

King Diamond, Overkill, Night Demon

November 3, The Theatre at Great Canadian Resort, Toronto ON

On a chilly Sunday the mighty King Diamond made a stop in Toronto while on the Saint Lucifer’s Hospital 1920 North American tour.

The night of face melting music was kicked off by Night Demon, a heavy metal trio based out of California and one of the hardest working touring bands. Seriously, their tour shirt has so many dates on the back, you almost need a magnifying glass. Night Demon played a solid seven-song set, one which featured Jarvis (bass) and Armand (guitar) running through the crowd while rocking out, something which definitely got the crowd warmed up. Always a pleasure seeing Night Demon.

Next up, Overkill. The first word that comes to mind for their set is massive, it seriously felt like they were playing on some huge festival stage instead of a theatre. Another short but sweet set with seven original tracks and a cover of “Fuck You” by The Subhumans which received much crowd participation. Not sure what took me so long to catch an Overkill show but I’ll hopefully make it to another, as this band is extremely tight on stage.

Finally, the legend himself, King Diamond. The King is fond of theatrics and this tour was no exception with a detailed stage setup, costumes, and the usual dramatic performances to accompany the top notch playing from the entire band. King Diamond mesmerized the crowd for a 14-song set with favourites such as “Arrival”, “Halloween” and closing with a classic, “Abigail”. Also played were a few songs from their upcoming album, *The Institute*. A personal highlight, when the King noticed me rocking out while shooting in the photo pit and sent the devil horns my way. Fucking awesome. Overall, a wicked concert and a super fun night for all who attended.

- Rae Chatten

King Diamond, Overkill, Night Demon

Nov 18, Vogue Theatre, Vancouver BC - Presented by MRG LIVE

When we got news the King was hitting Vancouver again with NYC Thrash OGs Overkill, we knew it couldn’t be missed. Unfortunately, there were some problems with the Canadian leg of the tour resulting in several cancelled dates, so we lucked out in Vancouver.

Up first was Night Demon who were a solid three-piece thrash outfit with hints of NWOBHM, especially Diamond Head. They were tight and I would easily watch them again. Overkill was next and they pulverized the crowd with classics from *Feel the Fire* and *Taking Over* as well as a solid mix of stuff taken from their huge catalogue. The highlight was a cover of “Fuck You” by The Subhumans, which got the crowd amped for King Diamond who came out blasting! His band was in top form with a killer stage set-up. With no new album out (Hurry up, it’s been decades) We got songs from *Abigail*, *Them*, *Fatal Portrait* and *Conspiracy* right out of the gate. King Diamond’s vocals were great on this night and he had a wicked backup singer as well. The

a sold out audience. Grey-haired veterans of the scene showed along with at least two more younger generations of fans. The atmosphere was palpable, feeling dangerous. Troublemakers did make themselves known, with a few fans getting kicked out during the proceedings.

Armored Saint made their first appearance ever in Calgary on this night, with John Bush being enthused about playing to a new city, saying we were de-virginizing each other. Bush then finally showed the city what they’ve been missing from one of the best voices in metal. To top off the exciting set in which the band played some old favourites and new dynamic greats like “Standing on the Shoulders of Giants,” Bush took the microphone to the upper seated sections of the Palace during “Can U Deliver”.

W.A.S.P.’s influence on metal is perhaps a bit understated. Directly or indirectly, traces of the band can be seen in black metal, thrash, death metal, shock rock and so on. On this tour, they performed what brought them to the dance, mainly tracks from their first album. The set was split between those tracks and another set of favourites.

It’s to be respected to see videos of W.A.S.P. from the ’80s playing on the screen behind the band and seeing the same charismatic and controversial figure, but older. Blackie Lawless’ tasseled boots made him look similar to a metal-themed professional wrestler and more of a larger than life figure than he already is. Songs like “Tormentor” and “The Torture Never Stops” especially rocked but Lawless and company really shined during the performance of “Sleeping (In the Fire)”. It might be the last time W.A.S.P. play these songs live, said Lawless, though tonight the fans just appreciated the opportunity to see W.A.S.P. at all.

- Ryan Dyer



WASP - Photo by Chad Persley

Crossword Answers

KING DIAMOND										REOPENINGS									
S	C	U	B	A		B	R	O		M	A	G	S						
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CROSSWORD NO. 110										DECEMBER, 2024									

Absolute Movie Reviews

All The Haunts Be Ours: A Compendium of Folk Horror Vol. 2

Everything fans of folk horror want to know but were afraid to ask is continuing to be explored in an all-new continuation, simply titled *All the Haunts Be Ours: A Compendium of Folk Horror Volume Two*. Not only am I a rabid completest but also this new collection offers recent movies that define what this genre is all about. The care and attention put into these collections says it all. I'm glad there's a lot more to explore. What's offered continues what the first set started. It begins with the documentary that started it all, *Woodlands Dark and Days Bewitched*, produced and curated by Kier-La Janisse.

She's an adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Communication and Creative Arts at Deakin University. Also, the books she's published include *House of Psychotic Women: An Autobiographical Topography of Female Neurosis in Horror and Exploitation Films* (2012/2022) and *A Violent Professional: The Films of Luciano Rossi* (2007). There's also *Weird Wednesday and the Birth of the American Genre Film Archive* (2021) and *Satanic Panic: Pop-Cultural Paranoia in the 1980s* (2015).

In volume two, the films that are offered include more modern works which have been released recently. They also take a dive into a region I wanted to know more about– South Asia!

I've compiled a quick list of the top five must-see films out of the 24. While I admit being biased because of my love for South Asian horror cinema, this list goes beyond the

titles listed. They are: *Bakeneko: A Vengeful Spirit* (Japan, 1968), *Nang Nak* (Thailand, 1999), *Sundelbolong* (Indonesia, 1981), *Suzzanna: The Queen Of Black Magic* (USA, 2024) and *Blood Tea And Red String* (USA, 2006).

From the Press Release:

Unquiet spirits have gathered once again: *All The Haunts Be Ours: A Compendium Of Folk Horror Volume Two* brings together 24 films representing 18 countries for more of the best-loved, rarely seen, thought-lost and brand-new classics of folk horror, most making their disc debuts including the North American Disc Premieres of the Severin Films Original Productions *To Fire You Come At Last* directed by Sean Hogan and the documentary *Suzzanna: The Queen Of Black Magic* directed by David Gregory, which will have its World Premiere at the Sitges Film Festival on October 12th.

The set also features 55+ combined hours of new and archival Special Features including trailers, interviews, audio commentaries, short films, video essays, historical analyses and bonus feature-length films; a 252-page hardcover of newly commissioned folk horror fiction by luminaries that include Ramsey Campbell, Cassandra Khaw and Eden Royce with illustrations by Drazen Kozjan, and much more, all curated and produced by Kier-La Janisse.

- Ed Sum

Deaner '89

Still Rockin' the Mullet!

Available to buy or rent on digital and on-demand December 6, 2024

Deaner '89 is not part of the *FUBAR* continuity and fans shouldn't be disappointed. Although it shares similar DNA with the film that started it all, where the story is being pursued by an invisible journalist, what happens here simply concerns

Here, it's being filmed at Murdoch's Mansion, and to see where he's at now is rather ironic.

When much of it is more about brother and sister going through the motions of their high school life, everything changes when a trunk gets delivered to Dean, and Jen (Star Slade) bugs the elder sibling to open it up! And what's revealed isn't necessarily a Pandora's box of trouble.

Although the presentation moves from one story chapter to another in a very scattered approach– where they concern brother and sister discovering their cultural identity, dealing with a rival in high school, and discovering music for the first time (including an obvious *Back to the Future* reference)– this work is very entertaining. And what's presented has enough moments to show how the music lives in Dean's heart.

And the music choices are dead on! I appreciate that this very Canadian film even gives credit to some Canadian artists, like Gowan. With most of it performed by the in-house band led by Spence, it's (all) still rock'n roll to me!

4 Stars out of 5
- Ed Sum

Introducing The Film Masters Preservation Group and A Review of their Latest

The Film Masters is a group of historians and enthusiasts who seek to celebrate the preservation



and restoration of films that were once loved in the big screen, but are now sitting dormant in vaults. Usually, these B movies don't have a good shelf life, but for fans of cult cinema, forgotten horror classics and simply the greats of yesteryears, the products they've been offering lately are simply wonderful. As a Roger Corman fan, they have been slowly unveiling those movies some fans may not be aware of.

But there are also the actors from long ago who are now forgotten or not introduced to North American audiences. Few people know Klaus Kinski. His fame peaked in the '60s because of his work with Werner Herzog, and there are also various directors too! He's the focus in the latest release, a double-feature that includes *Creature With the Blue Hand* and *Web of the Spider*.

Here, Dave Emerson (Kinski), escapes from the asylum and decides that hiding out at his family estate is the best course of action. When his twin, Richard (also Kinski), arrives, there's a chance to turn his life around. However, he'll have to dispense with his brother! In this crime drama that suggests a serial murderer can get a second chance, perhaps not!

This film made at Rialto Film's studios helps add to the claustrophobia. As most of the action takes place in a closed set, to deliver the Gothic vibes must have been tough. While the honour goes to Alfred Vohrer, who directed this film, all the work really showcases Kinski's talent. In the updated version, *The Bloody Dead*, the producers filmed new scenes to make the film all the more terrifying! The distributors presented this print in its raw, transferred state, without remastering it for Blu-ray.



The treat here is that we have three films in one package! While the first is a fine example of krimi cinema, the other is all out haunted house! Although not certified, I firmly believe the former helped establish what we know as masked slasher movies from Hollywood in the later years. The original form enjoyed modest success from the '50s to early '70s before works like *Black Christmas* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* introduced the masses to Hollywood's version of the subgenre. But I'm sure this movie defined the tropes, as it's been an ongoing franchise since John Carpenter's *Halloween*!

Whether that's true, only he knows. As for a proper festive treat, plays Edgar Allan Poe in *Web of the Spider*. This bonus film is the more supernatural of the two. Here, although Klaus' role is minimal, his narrative sets the tone for what's to come. Alan Foster (Anthony Franciosa) helps Poe recover from a bout of madness following a paranormal investigation in a cemetery. While neither truly believe, it's the journalist's encounter with one of the spectres of Blackwood manor that gets truly Dark Shadows. The fact he sees Elisabeth consistently can be a problem, but as for whether he believes she's truly real, well that'd be saying too much.

Although he knows she's dead, does she? When Foster is in love, the big question is if he can escape the manor's thrall too! Or can he pull off what I call "an Eleanor" (from *The Haunting of Hill House*) in order to find his peace? The narrative beats say no, but I think he said yes.

4 Stars out of 5
Creature with the Blue Hand Teaser Commentary
- Ed Sum

Scab Vendor Documentary

For anyone who doesn't want to take the time in reading, *Scab Vendor: Confessions of a Tattoo Artist*, I think

you're missing out! After seeing the documentary based on the biography of Jonathan Shaw, it's tough to say which of the two I like more. Directors Lucas de Barros and Mariana Thome delivered everything considered punk about this person in an excellent visual form. Through personal interviews, past clips and archival material, not only does this feature highlight the life and times of this individual, but also dives deep into why his skills are so revered.

That's because he wanted to evolve the art of tattoo, and make that sketch into some beautiful, next level stuff. He doesn't want to provide to his clients something people can get anywhere. Instead, it's about delivering a product for those who love body art can proudly display.

His client list doesn't include sailors and your typical military men. There are even police officers, too. In the past, when his work was seen as underground, he had to be cautious about accepting clients. These days, he's not as worried, but to hear his story in glorious detail had me hooked every second. That also includes tales from his youth, why he moved to Rio to establish himself, and what happened when he came home.

Those tales make this film shine, and despite the obstacles that he faced in life, I'm glad he's no holds barred in what he reveals in this documentary. All of those details really elevate this work as a must-see.

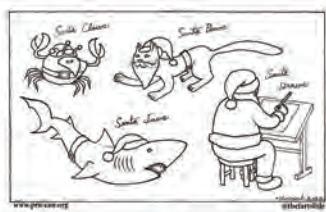
5 Stars out of 5
- Ed Sum



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Absolute Album Reviews

Mad Locust Rising - Live at Hammersmith Odeon

Agent Steel

Cherry Red Records

This is an excellent record of Agent Steel's now-legendary Hammersmith Odeon show in 1987. It shows how popular thrash metal had become that a cult act could headline the same venue as Motörhead and Iron Maiden and Metallica.

John Cyriis' voice is like marmite, I like it, but not everyone does. I feel it gives the band a distinct identity of their own. Lyrically too, Agent Steel were in *X-Files* territory before there was an *X-Files*; again, they were ahead of their time. Conspiracy rules the roost now, there is more of an audience now for their ideas than there was then. Musically, the band are super tight; not surprisingly, since they feature the legendary James Murphy (Death, Obituary, Testament, Cancer and more) on guitar. The sound quality on this re-issue is excellent and the bonus DVD is a nice addition.

- Steve Earles

Foul and Bereft of Insight

Ape War

Shit is bad in 2024. Global conflict and ecological collapse beckon while our corporate overlords concentrate their power and idiots in office continue to dither– the car truly is on fire and nobody is behind the wheel. The future that the crust punks warned us about has arrived. Vancouver stalwarts Ape War give us music for these end times in *Foul and Bereft of Insight*; their seventh burnt offering in twelve years.

There is comfort in the familiar threads weaving through the fabric of their cro-magnon brand of crusty thrashcore: vintage Earache-schooled riffs turbocharge seasick arrangements that lurch from skull-cracking gallop to woozy beatdown-breakdowns like an Amphetamine Reptile. In a world of changing symbolic values and declining security, these references– a bit of Botch and Deadguy here, a bit of Repulsion and Melvins there– ground and root us in a cultural context. The aesthetic evokes a world with which we might have fond memories: circle pits, getting your ass thrown around at an all-ages show, washing out a fresh cut in the venue bathroom during the tripped-out prog interlude. There is a sense of tradition and maybe even permanence in this world. The perseverance of this world makes us believe in our own. If Ape War's adrenaline-soaked outsider music can survive twelve years and multiple lineup changes, maybe we can all make it, too?

As indicated by the title of the aforesaid tripped-out prog interlude, however, these are Delusions of Reprieve. The future is fucked and these guys know it. *Foul and Bereft of Insight* offers songs about the spectacle of decline and ruination, about futility and fatal errors. Cascading structural changes shake us out of our familiar comforts, as in the quicksilver 6/4 to 4/3 curveball on opener "The Redemption of MJ." It feels like the ground beneath our feet isn't just shifting; it's crumbling.

The familiar fabric, it turns out, still abrades. Dense textural layers of blown-out effects and half-buried harmonies give the arrangements a claustrophobic gravity and chasmic depth. Guttural howls and back-and-forth scream-exchanges impart a sense of apocalyptic intensity and urgency. The tension in the songs feels volatile: when riffs and drums spin out of sync at the end of "Dumb Shit's" final blast, it feels like an inevitable culmination. The structural violence of the songs provides what Cynic once called reflections of a dying world. This is violent music to prepare us for violent times.

Foul, yes. But is it Bereft of Insight?

That might be the album's only lie.

- Tom Howard

Destination Unknown

Beyond Vegas

Independent

The 2014 formed, Geelong and Ballarat based band Beyond Vegas are making waves with their first full-length album release *Destination Unknown* with lead singer and rhythm guitarist Neil Miel taking the front position. The introduction to the first track of the album "Always Someone Lonelier" induces a sense of that classic late '80s metal sound that has escaped the minds of many modern-day bands. The noggin thrashing "April Fool's Day" rolls us into the third track "Down on Me", with a blues slide and lyrics "Got the truth in a suitcase, gonna take myself from this place." Throughout all their songs there's a consistent theme, though Beyond Vegas aren't afraid to incorporate a variety of sounds to match the mood as the album progresses, like in the song "Oh Yeah, Alright", where synthesized instrumentals are added in the background to enhance the fullness of their sound, and lead guitarist Mark Marsden flying off with a mean solo. The well roundedness of the album showcases a strong songwriting ability, incredible collaboration between all band members and a consistency in style that will hold them rock steady in the future during the creative process.

- Michael O'Connor

Greatest Hits Volumes 1 & 2

Cockney Rejects

Captain Oi

Ironically titled in true punk fashion, these two albums are actually the Rejects' debut and follow-up album packaged together in fine style. Though, again ironically, these albums actually charted well. And so they should have! Because the Rejects are and were the real deal from the street, not fake punk rockers like The Boomtown Rats then, or Rancid now!

It's an easy review, two albums of sincere high-energy street punk. I love it, and if you love real punk rock, you'll love it too!

- Steve Earles

Solid Old Hits Volume 1

Dead Rights

Independent

A three-track digital offering from Victoria punks Dead Rights. Only the second since 2021's *Bare Bones*, *SOH V1* is the first of a three-volume series to be released over the coming year. Each release is designed to represent the creative footprint of an individual member of the band. An intriguing concept and cleverly titled like something you'd find at Zellers beside *Sound Explosion Volume 7*.

These tracks are penned by frontman Kyle Burnett with the band collectively building the SoCal inspired wall of sound behind them. Indeed, the track California "is directed to the younger versions of ourselves in Dead Rights. We all grew up idolizing The SoCal punk scene and wanting to walk in the footsteps of the bands that we loved. In this song I pose the question that I find myself asking periodically if I still uphold the values the 15-year-old kid from Port Alberni held so close." There's an excellent video that the band released with this track with snippets of tour footage from the past year. A personal highlight, "Burning Bridges" seems darker but it's about pushing past negatives and moving forward.

After touring relentlessly, expect more focus on new material being released from Dead Rights. Keep an eye out for the next in the SOH series February of 25.

- John Carlow

Records

When you see the legendary Peaceville logo, you know you'll hear something original and excellent. Doedsmaghird do not disappoint with *Omniverse Consciousness*. There are no musical reference points from other bands here. Doedsmaghird sound only like themselves, surely the highest compliment you can pay a band, and with Peaceville they are truly in the right creative environment.

Uplifting, cosmic, progressive an adventurous, *Omniverse Consciousness* is the sound of a band constantly scaling new heights and reporting in sound on the strange and beautiful things they see when they get there!

- Steve Earles

Remembering - Anthology 1996-2017

Eric Bell

Cherry Red Records

In my native land of Ireland (full of savage Guinness-crazed leprechauns and beguiling banshees, where shamrock and shenanigans abound-I could go on but I'd need a retainer from the Irish tourist board!) Thin Lizzy are legends, which makes Lizzy found guitarist Eric Bell a living legend!

And deservedly so, this excellent five-CD collection showcases the work of a virtuoso musician. Hard rock, Celtic rock, the Blues, Thin Lizzy classics, Eric Bell plays them all from the heart. If you love Thin Lizzy and you love Ireland (how could you not?), you'll love this!

- Steve Earles

Demo 2024

Kira

Featuring six short tracks in just under ten minutes, this is yet again another delicious blast of old-school sounding hardcore punk rocking! The production is raw– but the instruments are on time and overall, the vibes presented are spectacular!

The guitar is simplistic but heavy, the vocals are just as raw as the production– but add force to the music– and the drumming is a standard but well-done mix of brutality and anarchistic pummeling!

Kira hails from Los Angeles, and this particular demo is available for streaming and on cassette. Although I listened to this streaming on YouTube, one could make a stab that this demo would sound pretty damn rad on tape–so snag it if you can!

-Devin J. Meaney

Syy

Mork

Peaceville Records

It is only right and proper than the mysteriously monikered Mork are on the legendary Peaceville Records, home of one of my all-time favourite bands, Darkthrone, with their legendary hellbound underground sounds.

And indeed, that is appropriate comparison. For while Mork create similar raw black metal to early Darkthrone, there are also the progressive touches and flourishes of later Darkthrone.

To sum up, Mork's music is sincere, powerful, and evocative!

- Steve Earles

Live In The UK

Mountain, ft. Leslie West and Corky Laing

Cherry Red Records

An easy review this one! If you love Mountain, this six-CD collection of Mountain playing live in the UK will be heaven! In fairness, they are a great band, but it gets a bit same-y six CDs into listening.

But, as I said, an easy review to write, if you love Mountain, you'll love this collection!

- Steve Earles

Until The Night

New Skeletal Faces

Peaceville Records

It is entirely appropriate that the album of the year is released at the end of the year-winter-season of cold mist, embracing darkness, and above all, romance, the romance of the mysterious and unknown, the promise of adventure with the like-minded.

The splendidly-named New Skeletal Faces are the missing link between Bauhaus and Bathory, between Darkthrone and Dead Can Dance, between Siouxsie and the Banshees and Slayer. This is as it should be, but sadly, rarely is. A point hammered home with their magnificent cover of Bathory's *Raise the Dead*, which fits in seamlessly with New Skeletal Faces' own superb originals. Their lyrics are truly beautiful, poems to the romanticism and rawness of the night. Remember, it's only when it's dark enough that you can see the stars, light-bringers illuminating our truths within, whether we like those truths or not.

New Skeletal Faces look perfect for their music, this is not a job for them, this is who they are. It is also perfect that this album is released on Peaceville, home of Darkthrone, Paradise Lost and so much dark art. To their magnificent ranks we can add New Skeletal Faces. For make no mistake, New Skeletal Faces rule the night... New Skeletal Faces Reign!

- Steve Earles

Waiting For the Power - The Early Years

Nightmare

Cherry Red Records

Originally released in the 1980s, (the era when Cliff Burton reigned supreme, giant Ozzy Osbournes roamed free, Accept were both restless and wild, and indeed, as fast as a shark, and spandex ruled the Earth, and lo, the Goddess of Metal looked down and saith, "Ye know not how good ye have it, thy ungrateful wretches thee, thus will I send in the 1990s a plague of vile nu-metal bands to torment me. Bruce Dickinson will leave Iron Maiden, Black Sabbath will release Forbidden, which should have been. But I am a merciful Goddess of Metal, and in the 21st Century I will return all my treasures to ye. Yea, Bruce back in Maiden, Rob back in Priest, Ozzy back in Sabbath, and all will be well again." Nightmare's *Waiting for The Twilight* (1984) and *Power of the Universe* (1985) are two of the best New Wave of British heavy metal records you've never heard.

Though Nightmare hail from the fair country of France, they share a musical DNA with Iron Maiden, Saxon, Diamond Head, and early Def Leppard. There is much to love here for fans of Paul Di'anno era Iron Maiden (of whom I'm one), the vocals, songs, twin guitar harmonies, intricate galloping Steve Harris-esque bass, all scream "Killers". Which is as it should be! It's stirring stuff, metal made with love as all things should be, these are two albums anyone who loves '80s metal truly needs to hear.

- Steve Earles

Demo 2024

PUCK

Up all night leaning into 5 am, I happened to come upon potentially the shortest demo I came across this year. *Demo 2024* by PUCK features two short tracks in under four minutes– but this does not stop it from being a nice little blast of heavy fuzz! You might need to listen to it two or three times in a row for it to really sink in, but with that said, after the second listen I can state that this is very much worth a view!

The guitar is heavy and the vocals are forward and driving. The percussion is well played and all in all the musicianship is "more than" decent. I won't harp on, as the time it would take me to explain the intricacies of the demo you'd be able to listen to it three times

over. Just listen to this demo and let the sounds of the Indonesian underground grasp your eardrums in its clutches!

- Devin J. Meaney

The Complete EMI Recordings 1989-1995

Thunder

Cherry Red Records

Thunder are best known for their first three albums for EMI. Not really my cup of tea, but for those who love British blues based hard rock in the vein of Bad Company or Whitesnake, there is much to like here.

I can't fault Thunder's sincerity or songwriting, and while their halcyon EMI years are far behind them, they still, deservedly have a devoted following to this day. For their fans, this is a staggeringly good value collection, boasting an immense amount of rare and unreleased music as well as the aforementioned EMI albums "Backstreet Symphony", "Laughing on Judgement Day" and "Behind Closed Doors".

For fans of Bad Company, The Faces, Whitesnake and Def Leppard.

- Steve Earles

Powder Dry

Tim Bowness

K-Scope

This is a really easy review to write! Tim Bowness is a well-kept secret, who won't be a secret much longer. Tim is a marvelous singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist. So, Tim is a solo artist in the truest sense of the word. There is no one stand-out track on *Powder Dry*, because they're ALL highlights. This album just drips with catchy sincere original songs.

Credit must also be given to the marvelous Steven Wilson for mixing and 'patience'. Never underestimate the value of patience, it's an increasingly rare commodity!

To sum up, this is a simply brilliant album, it comes from the heart as all good things should.

- Steve Earles

The Complete Trojan and Talion Recordings '84 - '90

Trojan

Dissonance Productions

This is a five-CD treasure chest of quality heavy metal! What an inspired idea to gather together all of Trojan and Talion's work in one lovingly-curated set!

The first disc is the classic Trojan album *Chasing the Storm*, originally issued on *Roadrunner*. It is a true classic, unjustly obscure with terrific songs, great sound, great playing. The second disc *Capturing the Storm - Live at The Dynamo Club* shows Trojan on fire. I'd love to have been at this gig!

Sadly, Trojan were beset with problems not of their own making, and regrouped as the thrasher Talion, the third disc is their incredible *Killing the World* album. Wrapped up in Kev Walker's magnificent artwork it is simply the best thrash metal album you've never heard! The fourth disc, *Live in Bulgaria*, shows what a live force Talion were!

The final disc, *Trojan Demos*, does exactly what it says on the tin, packed full of obscure and wonderful Trojan tracks. You would never be able to hunt all these metal gems down otherwise.

Highly recommended and I would love to see Trojan/Talion reform on the back of this fabulous collection!

- Steve Earles

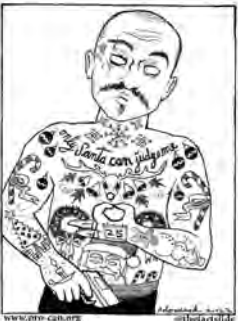
DIRTNAP - Four Finger Discount Independent

Dirtnap is one of Victoria's best young punk bands. I've seen them live a bunch of times and they're killer. Now let's see if they can cram all the energy of their live set into an album. The cover is punker than spitting on old ladies, and yah the singer od really did cut his fucking finger off with a paper sheer and made it into a necklace. Anyway,

right from the first song (Billy) this album slays. These guys went through a line-up change which has made them tighter and way heavier. The songs cover a lot of issues relevant to a young punk with some good wit and humor to keep a smile on your face while you bash your brains out rocking to these gnarly tunes. My new anthem "All I wanna do is smoke meth and kill cops". Fuck Yah. Then you get Methamphetamine (could be about anything) with a breakdown on par with Choking Victim. Corpse Dust starts off ska punk but gets all heavy and sneaks in all kinds of surprises which is something these guys are good at. Awkward Erection and Eat The Rich keep it rolling, this album is great, it's some kind of punk ska thrash metal hybrid. These songs are all good and... fuck Eat The Rich is so rad. They finish it off with Ringer, Kentucky Fried Children, and Talkin' Shit & Tellin' Lies. All in all this album rules and Dirtnap are outa hand. Buy the album and go see them on tour.

Cheers

- Murray the cretin Acton.



Absolute Graphic Novel Reviews

ABSOLUTE BATMAN #1

Written by Scott Snyder with art by Nick Dragotta, *Absolute Batman* is a weird one for me. Offering an original take on Batman's origins and world, it's a best-selling comic, and from what I've heard online and in the shop, it's getting positive reviews from Bat-fans.

I found it unreadable; at best boring, and at worst bizarrely out of touch, reminding me of a hackneyed '90s comic, full of cheesy hyperbolic violence, and street gangs that feel like they were ripped straight from a FOX News broadcast designed to scare old people into voting conservatively.

The art is lively, with good kinetic motion, but doesn't make me feel like I understand the spaces it's setting the story within, and the story itself has no meaningful connections to reality. You'll never mistake these characters for real people; they're tropes and cliches set loose in a cartoon city with no attempt to approximate the real world, resulting in a book that's both bombastic, yet boring. It's too goofy to be dramatic or sincere, but it's too sadistically edgy and overwrought to be fun.

Just another reminder that even the biggest hits won't always be everyone's cup of Bat-tea.

- Hank at Golden Age

CALL OF CTHULHU

A manga version of Lovecraft's *Call of Cthulhu* seems as obvious a pairing as peanut butter and chocolate, but in this case it's more like cold squid in my caramel. Not bad, but not as good as I hoped.

Artist and writer Gou Tanabe translates HP Lovecraft's seminal short story into graphic form well enough, but never quite manages to make the story feel their own. It's a bit too faithful to the original story's structure, preventing the book from feeling like it offers much in terms of exploring the mythos it's set within.

The indescribable horrors are illustrated in wild and original ways, and they're worth the price of admission, but it's the images of humans that make me the most uncomfortable; there's a bit of the uncanny valley to the eyes, which I found a bit distracting.

When a story jumps mediums, from prose to comic or comic to live-action, you gotta think about how the change impacts the flow of the narrative, and I don't feel like enough of that consideration went into this project, leaving us with an interesting curiosity that doesn't quite manage to be more than the sum of its parts.

- Hank at Golden Age



Poached Records

By Bluto the Garbageman

"What we have here is a failure to accumulate" – Ernest P. Worell

'Tis the season to learn how to construct pipe bombs and start burning off your fingerprints over an open fire. I feel that racism and sexism kind of get all the attention when it comes to isms, so I feel it is important, especially around this time of year, to continuously remind everyone within earshot of their ugly, inbred cousin, consumerism.

I understand why this evil can be easily swept under the Christmas tree skirt while racism and sexism take center stage. Unfortunately, for this pathetic representation of a civilization, we are easily distracted by shiny objects, meanwhile the atrocity of over-consumption is free to control our thoughts and disturb our deepest emotions. A devious mis-creation spawned from the same egg that birthed the likes of racism and sexism, consumeristic greed is the sibling that was held back a grade or two. Consumerism is the kid that showed up to school with only one sock on, always covered in crumbs and didn't learn how to blow its nose without adult assistance 'til high school. It's the rat in the maze that goes back for a second helping of cheese, even though the first bite sent an electric shock through its entire skeleton.

DAREDEVIL MODERN ERA EPIC COLLECTION: OUT

Written by Brian Michael Bendis, with art by Alex Maleev and colours by Matt Hollingsworth– three of my all-time favourite creators– *DAREDEVIL: OUT* is a standout collection from the early 2000s. And it is, in my opinion, one of the finest examples you'll ever find of a superhero comic book written for a mature audience. I hold it in the same regard that I hold the best crime media, including shows like *The Sopranos*, and movies like *Pulp Fiction*.

The storyline explores Daredevil grappling with his previously secret identity becoming a publicly-discussed urban myth, and the art and the writing both make these feel like real events happening to real people, while at the same time, it captures that Coen Brothers vibe– a crime world that's brutal and sinister, but crackling with dark humour and grounded by characters whose cynicism feels painfully real.

If *Absolute Batman #1* missed the mark, *Out* is a masterclass. This is how you tell a superhuman vigilante story. One of the best books I've ever read, and I can't wait to read it again.

- Hank at Golden Age

I CAN COUNT TO TEN

Roman Dirge

This is one of those horrible little books for horrible people, in which some horrible fates befall some cute little creatures.

It's basically an adorable story which gets eaten alive by a grotesque monster that knows only disgusting cruelty and hate. Imagine the educational content of *Sesame Street* combined with the ruthless body-horror of *The Thing*.

You might know Roman Dirge from his comic book Lenore, and if you do, congratulations on being an aging goth-kid, or if you're not as old as the mountains, a rotten little emo brat. For the uninitiated, Dirge crafts stories that look like bedtime tales for kids but are secretly nightmares for the maladjusted– we're

We really can't talk about consumerism without mentioning its long-time, late-night booty call, capitalism. If you spend \$60 on a candle that smells like a gas station bathroom fart, mixed with vanilla and pumpkin spice, we can't hang out anymore.

Why do we continue to fund what we vocally despise? I am guilty without a reasonable doubt. I ordered pencil crayons off Amazon due to my house arrest or as the "doctors" like to call it, "agoraphobia." So, I know it is not easy to avoid unnecessary luxuries, but just like any life-altering addictions, it can be managed and eventually overcome. Consumerism does not require intelligence, so even if you have a slight grasp on reality and your surroundings, you have the chance to outsmart it.

The impure convenience of product availability since 2020 has expanded at such an alarming rate, I genuinely have an intense, growing fear we are just a handful of credit card transactions away from completely losing what little power we still obtain. We break our backs to barely earn a living, just to turn around and hand it back to the soulless corporations that wouldn't give you a free bottle of water if your child's hair was on fire. Even if it was a cell phone created by the same company that blew up in that kid's ear. They still owe you nothing, yet you keep giving everything you have to them. Even worse, YOU owe them.

I don't have any real solutions as I am covered in mud, face-down in the trenches alongside the few that have not surrendered.

All I can say is, protect your world, no matter how small it may be. It's yours. Try to find satisfaction in creating rather than purchasing, and if you must purchase, give your money to someone that worked for it. Keep it within your family or community. Not a board of rich, old white men that have never stepped foot in the factories and sweat shops they make billions from every quarter. Not even Mariah could put a bow on that strategically planned attack disguised as a Christmas miracle. Fill your stockings full of bars of soap and head to the mall food court swinging. Find a couple rich, homophobic assholes. String them together with X-Mas lights, hold a mistletoe

talking stories full of death and suffering and ironic misery. Y'know, the good stuff.

And this book is for sure full of death, suffering, and ironic misery. The art is whimsically charming in a way that makes your skin crawl, while the narrative revels in its cruelty. Together, they create a perfect storm of unsettling delight– a book that sticks with you like a splinter you're oddly fond of. If you're a weird creep who likes weird creepy things.

- Hank at Golden Age

WE3

Am I talking about yet another project from writer Grant Morrison and artist Frank Quitely? Yes. Yes, I am.

WE3 tells the story of three innocent pets– a dog, a cat, and a bunny– abducted by a secret military project and turned into cybernetic weapons of war. But when the program's shut down, the scientists learn a brutal truth: you don't get between an animal and their home.

This one hits me in the gut every time. It's a story about survival, loyalty, and the desperate yearning for home– and it'll wreck you in the best way possible.

If you go by word-count, *WE3* is a quick read. If you go by illustrative content, it's one of those most densely layered stories you'll ever experience. It may take years to truly appreciate the work Frank Quietly put into some pages.

This is one of those books everybody should read. It should be in every school library. Gideons should leave copies in hotel rooms, just in case somebody is ever feeling lonely and lost, and needs something heartwarming to read. I really love this book. It's brutal, beautiful, and unforgettable. If you haven't read it yet, you're missing out on something truly special.

- Hank at Golden Age



over their fat heads and make them French kiss while you livestream the whole thing. Cancel the turkey this season and eat the rich.

Poached will be back to regular operations in the new year. More music news and less of whatever this has been. Stay safe out there, friends– it's a goddamn war zone.

Quick year wrap-up shoutouts. Without you people, 2024 would have been a little more boring than it was:

Dead Shit Earth, Bitter State, Exsang, Abuse, Krash, Clench Jaw, Off The Top Rope, The No Goes, Lavagoat, Mr. Awesome, Hacked Apart, Powertrip, TOAD, Trench Raid, Slutty Waist, Adriel/CFCR, Punks For Pups, Savage Henry, LaFrench, Repper,

Jodi, Greg, Alicia, Colin, Mike and the rest of the Black Cat crew, Venus Fly Crafts, Susynn Kroe, Ira and Aeryn/Absolute Underground, Milky/Unrest Records, Jan AG/Agathocles, Soul Mates, Scott/Tooth and Nail, Reject, Attack With Force, Beefy Records, Dayglo Abortions, Mean Bikini, Dan/Archagathus, Jacek/Grindfather, and everyone that got together for the cause. xo

"Ah, smell those Christmas trees. You can keep your 'Channel' Number 5, just give me a whiff of the old lonesome pine. That symbol of brotherly love, that centerpiece that all mankind gathers around to share the cranberry sauce shaped like a can."

– Ernest P. Worell



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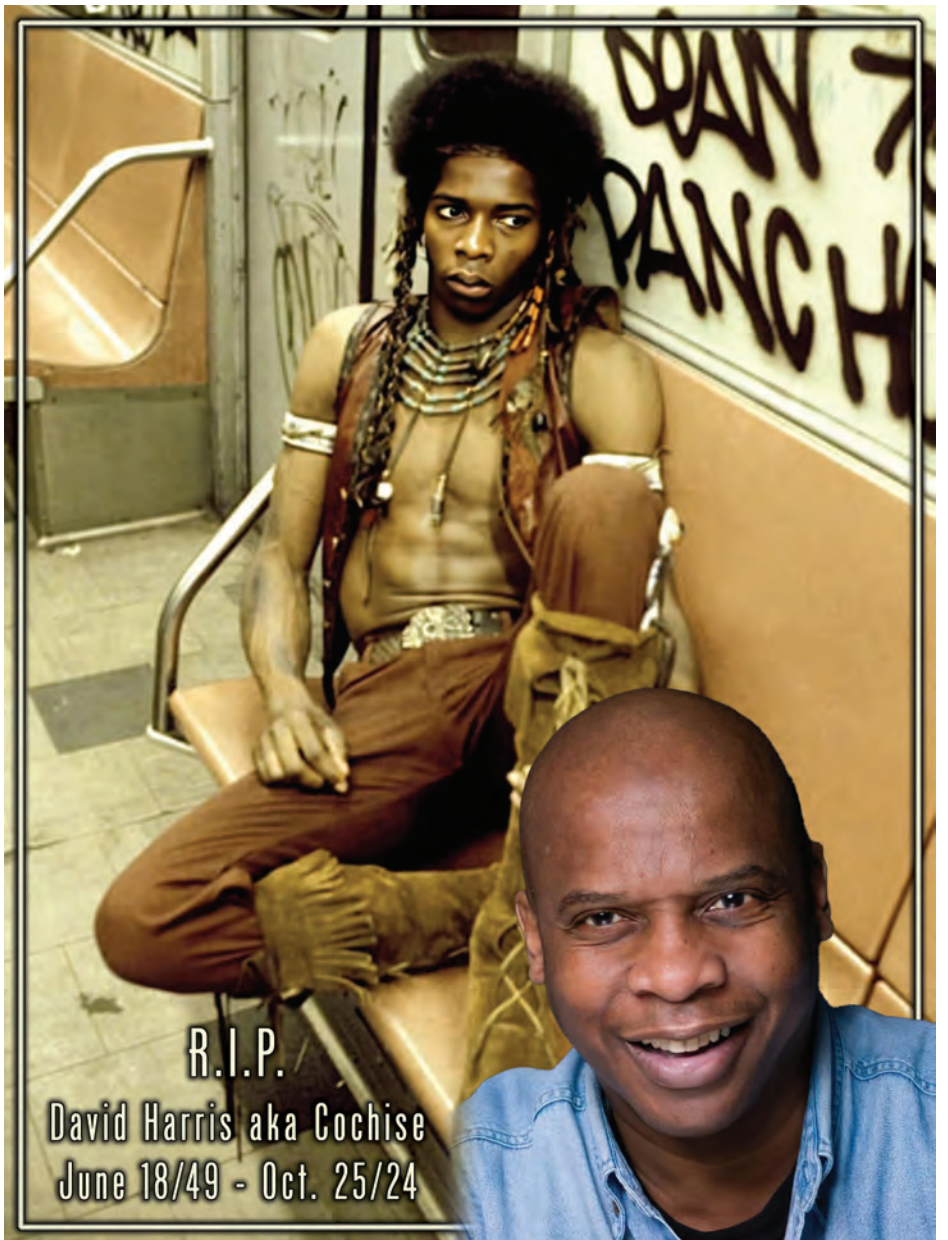


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